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ABSTRACT

A study examined the distance education needs of a specific subgroup of the off-campus population: 16- to 19-year-olds. It set out to determine: reasons for this group's choosing to study in the external mode; the nature and extent of required provision of external education; special curriculum, delivery, counseling, and support needs; and specific future policy recommendations. The study methodology included questionnaires, literature analysis, expert consultations, and a limited number of student interviews. Respondents to the questionnaires included 180 students (a 23% response rate), 43 Heads of External Studies (a response rate of approximately 93%), and 13 student advisers in Australian colleges. The data indicated that principal reasons for study externally were distance, preference for the flexibility of this method, work commitments, financial reasons, and scheduling conflicts. Findings indicated that Technical and Further Education (TAFE) was the major provider of postsecondary off-campus studies and that a shortfall already existed in the provision of on-campus places for students at Colleges of Advanced Education and universities. Heads of External Studies did not believe that 16- to 19-year-olds were suitable users of off-campus studies; they favored a mixed mode. A wide range of support mechanisms and delivery media was used. Staff generally believed this group required greater support than older students when studying off-campus. (Questionnaires and cover letters are appended.) (YLB)

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TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTANCE EDUCATION NEEDS FOR 16 TO 19 YEAR OLDS

Hugh Guthrie
Zofia Krzemionka

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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FOREWORD

The impetus for this study came from the work of John Anwyl, Margaret Powles and Kate Patrick entitled:

'Who uses External Studies?
Who should?'

Their study, like the present one, was commissioned by the Standing Committee on External Studies, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. Their report recommended (recommendation 5): 'that specific groups be targeted for detailed study . . . so that participation trends, detailed circumstances and special problems and needs of such groups can be understood and policy ptions and costing developed'. One such group identified was 16 to 19 year olds undertaking study wholly or partially in the off-campus mode.

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The project was instigated at the request of the External Studies Standing Committee of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and supported by a grant of $17,000. This support is gratefully acknowledged.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

During the last decade there has been an increasing emphasis on developing a well educated and trained society in Australia. Comparative figures from the 1970s suggest that the Australian population has had a relatively low participation rate in tertiary education when compared to similar developed countries. De Bats (1985) points out that CTEC figures in the 1970s showed that only about one-half (49%) of Australian 15-18 year olds were attending school of any kind, secondary, vocational or tertiary. This compared poorly with such countries as Japan, Canada and the United States. Moreover De Bats points out:

> OECD figures show that the average age of leaving education in Australia is 17.7 years, a figure which approximates that in Portugal, Austria, the U.K., Greece and Spain - countries not noted for their economic prowess. Japanese students leave education on average a full year later than do Australians. Canadian young people stay another year and a half. Swedes persist on average another two years, and young Americans stay in school nearly four years longer than their Australian counterparts. The average number of years of education in Australia is 12.6 years; the average figure in Japan is 14 years, in Canada it is 15.6 years and in the United States it is 16.7 years. Just 13.3 per cent of 19 year olds are enrolled in education in Australia, as compared to 24.3 per cent of Canadians at this age, 36.9 per cent of Americans and 40.9 per cent of Japanese 19 year olds. On all measures of educational attainment, Australia lags far behind most advanced western nations. (De Bats, in Beasley 1985, p.133)

The figures discussed by De Bats were first published in 1981 by the OECD. McCann _et_ _al_. (1984) point out that in 1982-83, Australia was 17th out of 23 OECD countries in terms of percentage of full-time enrolled 15 to 19 year olds. They point out, however, that the comparison is only indicative:

> . . . as it does not take account of older age groups, part-time enrolments, and differences in schooling and training arrangements. Australia's level is similar to those of the UK and the Federal Republic of Germany, which also have strong traditions of employment-based training. In other countries equivalent training is provided through full-time study. Nevertheless, Australian participation in full-time education is low relative to other OECD countries." (McCann et al., 1984, p.55)

In recent times Federal Governments have reacted to this sort of information, and the socioeconomic imbalance in the provision of tertiary education, by adopting a policy of increasing retention rates of secondary schools and increasing the number of places available for students in all three sectors of tertiary education. One of their goals has been to produce a better trained and more highly skilled workforce. This emphasis has had a corresponding effect on the growth of distance education. The expansion has doubled the student numbers in university undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and has trebled in colleges of advanced education. In the TAFE sector, distance education provision has also doubled. (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) selected TAFE statistics, 1985).

There are approximately 40 institutions of higher education offering programs offering an off-campus mode. Of these, 10 are universities; the remainder are advanced education institutions. Most TAFE systems also presently offer, or are planning to offer, programs in the off-campus mode. CTEC statistics for 1985 show that approximately 100,000 students were enrolled in external studies courses. Of these just over half (56,687) were in TAFE; 15,972 were enrolled at universities, while the remainder (29,112) were enrolled in CAEs (Anwyl et al. 1986). In TAFE a further 15,901 students were studying by mixed mode enrolment.

The growth in distance education across the tertiary sectors can be attributed to an expansion of the perceived role of distance education. From its beginnings, distance education has attempted to overcome the barriers which made access difficult; for example, those isolated by distance from a tertiary institution, or those isolated either by disability or personal commitment. Distance education accommodates work, family and other commitments. Barriers to study have been progressively reduced with the introduction of more liberal entry policies by many tertiary institutions. Off-campus studies allow students to select from a wider choice of course offerings and institutions; they are also able to avoid timetable clashes which restricted not only the range of subjects they could take on-campus, but also the rate at which their studies could progress. It is no longer necessary for students to be constrained by the restrictions of full-time on-campus study, which can act as a barrier to many of those potential students with commitments which prevent them from participating in this form of study. Off-campus study can also be used to allow those who are effectively full-time on-campus students to cross institutional boundaries and enrol in subjects not offered at their own institutions, but which meet their personal and academic needs. Students may take individual subjects or parts of subjects using off-campus mode. In short, there has been a movement by tertiary education institutions towards a more flexible approach to learning.

In 1986 the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) External Studies Standing Committee commissioned a study designed to ascertain:

- who uses external studies;
- the composition of the groups whose only access to tertiary education may be via the provision of external studies; and
- the effects of institutional policies on the participation of these groups and to provide a rationale on priorities for the provision of external studies for these different groups.

This study was undertaken by Anwyl _et al_. from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne. Their report, which was completed in August 1986, was entitled: _Who uses external studies? Who should?_ Their project was designed both to gather information about those students who are using off-campus studies and establish a database for planning and policy making. From their extensive analysis of available data about off-campus students, they established that these students are older (average age is 30-40 years) than both part-time and full-time on-campus students. This population of off-campus students had become progressively older over the last decade. Within this population, less than 20% of students were aged 16-19 years. They found that economic and social factors influenced the choice of study mode for the whole of the external studies population. **It is one of the purposes of this present study to determine whether those reasons are, in fact, evident in the 16-19 year old group of the external off-campus population.**

Further data from Anwyl et al's work shows that some 20% of eligible students aged 20 years and under did not receive offers of tertiary places. Indeed, the work of Anderson and McDonald (1986) estimated that there was a shortfall of between 9,000 and 14,000 student places in the CAE and university sectors alone in 1986. Recent newspaper articles have suggested that the 1987 shortfall is of the order of 20,000 places. The various TAFE authorities also undoubtedly have demands on places which they cannot meet. Whether those students who did not receive offers of places are a potential off-campus clientele for the tertiary sector remains to be explored. What is apparent, however, is that a demand remains unmet and it is a problem which the Federal Government needs to examine in the broader context of reviewing the provision of tertiary education in Australia. While the Federal Government has maintained a firm policy in promoting a full secondary education and increasing the number of tertiary places available, clearly it is not able to do so at a rate which satisfies the current demand. The prospect exists, however, for these students to be at least offered places in the tertiary education system if the off-campus or mixed mode of study were promoted as ways of providing greater access. Moreover, if a greater number of students undertook part-time studies, this would allow a greater number of students to have access to tertiary education, while still fitting broadly within the existing guidelines which determine the level of funding an institution receives - that is, the number of equivalent full-time students (EFTS). A greater number of students might then be able to arrange their studies to accord with their personal needs (for example, part-time work, variable pace of study, avoidance of timetable clashes, and the incorporation of studies from two or more institutions). This, however, might necessitate a shift in resources within institutions.

In this context, the present study has set out to determine for 16 to 19 year old age group:

- the reasons for choosing to study in the external mode;
- the nature and extent of required provision of external education;

- special curriculum, delivery, counselling and support needs; and

- specific future policy recommendations.

Before considering the project methodology and results obtained, the notion of distance education itself will be defined. In addition, the position held by a number of bodies who make submissions to CTEC will be presented, including their advice on the provision of off-campus studies for 16 to 19 year olds.

1.2 DEFINITION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND USAGE OF TERMS

Distance education, for the purposes of this study, is defined as any form of study which does not require regular and frequent attendance either full-time or part-time at the institution at which the student is enrolled. The project team has noted that a number of terms are used throughout the tertiary education sector which refer to distance education. These include off-campus studies, external studies and study by correspondence. In this study, the project team has opted to use the term off-campus studies when referring to the mode of study. Combinations of off-campus study with on-campus study are commonly referred to as mixed mode. Mixed mode studies may take place both within subjects and within courses.

1.3 CURRENT POLICY POSITIONS

While CTEC (in vol. 1, part 1. Recommendations on guidelines. CTEC report for the 1985-1987 triennium) has recognised the benefits of access to off-campus studies for mature aged students, it has questioned the appropriateness of this mode for school leavers or those from disadvantaged groups. CTEC believed that special measures such as structured internal assistance would be necessary for students from these groups.

The Universities Council (in vol.1, part 3. Advice of Universities Council. CTEC report for the 1985-1987 triennium) acknowledged the provision of off-campus studies as an important opportunity in the higher education sectors for those students who would otherwise be unable to participate in such studies.

The Council believed that a considerable potential exists for improving student access through the development of new approaches to off-campus studies such as the varied use of new technology and the introduction of courses in disciplines not available at present. In line with the Government's policy of increasing participation and improving access, some modest growth of younger students was expected.

The advice of the Advanced Education Council (AEC) (in vol.1, part 4. CTEC report for the 1985-1987 triennium) suggests that the on-campus mode of study for school leavers is one which is most appropriate since it provides students with a sense of community, face-to-face teaching and a range of support services. For school leavers to benefit from an external mode of study, the Council believes that more interaction and special support services should become a part of external study delivery systems.

The suggestion from the Johnson Report (CTEC 1983) of a national network of study centres for off-campus students attached to TAFE colleges did not receive a high priority in a triennium where the major objective was to increase the participation of school leavers. However, the AEC also considered that the provision of effective study centres could provide adequate support for younger students in regional areas.

The major emphasis from the TAFE Council (in vol.1, part 5. Advice of the TAFE Council. Report for the 1985-1987 triennium) was access of disadvantaged groups such as the physically handicapped, socially isolated (for example, prisoners) and geographically isolated students to off-campus studies. An emphasis on the ways in which services were delivered was highlighted in order to enrich the provision. The Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network was cited as an example of a positive approach. In order for distance education to be more adaptive, encouragement was needed in the areas of access to educational facilities, integration of the off-campus and on-campus communities, the facilitation of interaction between staff and students, and for students, to motivate them and thus enhance their learning experience. These suggestions were prompted by Gough (1980).

The need for more information on the existence of a database and an emphasis on national coordination and cooperation (in Distance education vol.2, part 1. Recommendation on grants. Report for the 1985-1987 triennium) were the major factors which shaped CTEC's advice for the present triennium. For example, the preparation and production of off-campus course materials was an area where benefit would be derived from a cooperative approach. In addition, it would reduce duplication of effort. The need to inform all potential students of the nature and availability of external studies courses through a clearinghouse was recognised by CTEC. This need has been addressed by the directory of tertiary external courses in Australia which is compiled and published by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education at the University of Queensland with support from CTEC. Another response is the Coursefinder data base developed in Victoria at RMIT using VIATEL (RMIT Education Unit. Newsletter, November 1986). While CTEC has considered issues to increase the national coordination of off-campus studies further, there is a need to recognise the important role that off-campus studies have in this country and to explore ways of using it more fully and creatively.

The emphasis in the advice of the Advanced Education Council (AEC) (in vol.2, part 1. Advice of Councils. Report for the 1985-1987 triennium) lies in the recognition of distance education as a means by which access to advanced education can be broadened and made more equitable. A framework of general and specialised providers of external studies recommended by CTEC was acknowledged and the institutions were specified according to these designations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To meet the project objectives a variety of techniques has been employed. These include:

- questionnaires - which were administered to a sample of students and to all Heads of External Studies Departments in Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education and TAFE, as well as to staff responsible for counselling students. The student and Heads of External Studies questionnaires are presented in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively. An abridged version of the Heads of External Studies questionnaire was used for course advisors and student counsellors. This questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3;
- analysis of appropriate literature - including articles in learned journals and reports commissioned by the state and federal governments or government agencies;
- consultation with experts in the area - including members of the Project Advisory Committee (the membership of this committee is listed in the Acknowledgements);
- interviews - with a small number of 16 to 19 year old students studying in off-campus or mixed mode. These interviews were conducted with individuals by phone.

Table 1 shows the ways in which information was gathered about each of the project objectives. In all cases at least two sources of information were used.

TABLE 1

This table is used to show how information was gathered about each of the project objectives.

Method of information gathering Objective	Questionnaire all Heads of External Studies Departments	Questionnaire to students	Interviews of groups of individual students	Questionnaire to student counsellors	Advisory Committee and other Experts; Literature
1. Extent of participation of 16-19 year olds	X				X
2. Existing special provisions in: a) Curriculum b) Delivery c) Counselling d) Support	X			X	X
3. Reasons for choosing to study externally	X	X	X	X	
4. Nature and extent of required External Studies provisions	X			X	X
5. Special needs of External Students a) Curriculum b) Delivery c) Counselling d) Support	X		X	X	X
6. Specific future policy recommendations					X

2.2 THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

2.2.1 The sample

A sample of 16 to 19 year old students (their age was derived as at 1.1.87) was drawn from 6 organisations or institutions, spanning 3 states (Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia) and representing all three sectors of tertiary education.

Students at two institutions in each of the University and CAE sectors were sampled. They were:

University: Deakin University; and
Murdoch University.

CAE: Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education; and
South Australian College of Advanced Education.

Students enrolled in the off-campus mode in the Victorian and South Australian TAFE systems were also sampled. In South Australia all off-campus students are enrolled at the Adelaide College of TAFE. In Victoria off-campus studies are co-ordinated through the Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network which offers a wide range of courses at 18 centres located both in suburban Melbourne and country areas. The sample of institutions and organisations was chosen to be as representative as possible, given limits imposed by the size and time frame of the study. It contains a mixture of institutions, some of which are regarded as specialists in the provision of off-campus studies; others predominantly offer on-campus courses, but are involved at least to some extent in off-campus programs.

The population of 16-19 year old students enrolled in the off-campus or mixed mode at each institution was identified by a manual or computer-based search of student records which was conducted by the institution itself. In the Victorian TAFE system the 16-19 year old student population enrolled at each off-campus centre was identified from that centre's records.

Questionnaires were distributed to all 16 to 19 year old students enrolled in either off-campus or mixed mode study at each of the CAEs and universities sampled. In South Australian TAFE a sample of 200 students was randomly selected from the identified population.

In Victorian TAFE 16 to 19 year old students from 8 providers were sampled. These were students enrolled at:

- The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Off-Campus Centre (198);
- Dandenong College of TAFE (1);
- Preston College of TAFE (50);
- Outer Eastern College of TAFE-Lilydale Open Learning Centre (15);
- The School of Mines and Industries (Ballarat) Ltd. (30);
- The Gordon Technical College (50);
- Wimmera Community College of TAFE (11); and
- East Gippsland Community College of TAFE (Sale Off-Campus Centre) (17).

The numbers sampled at each institution are given in brackets.

The sample (372 students) was therefore drawn from a number of city and country providers. The Victorian sample was selected on the basis of those institutions who were able to co-operate with the project team within the time lines of the project.

The student questionnaires (Appendix 1) were either mailed directly from the TAFE National Centre using lists provided by individual institutions or, alternatively, an appropriate number of questionnaires was sent to the external studies co-ordinators at the institution concerned; these were then mailed to a student sample on the Centre's behalf. In every case a covering letter (Appendix 5) and a reply-paid envelope addressed to the TAFE National Centre were enclosed. Care were taken to ensure the confidentiality of individual responses.

On receipt by the Centre the questionnaires were coded, checked for anomalies and entered on a data file. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Results of this analysis are presented in section 3 of the present report. (Results, p. 18)

Details of the sample size and the number of respondents are given in Table 2. It is clear from the responses that the university response is represented primarily by that of Murdoch University while that of the CAE sector is represented predominantly (with a ratio of 3:1 approximately) by Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education. The TAFE responses are more balanced, although low, with 23% and 17% response rate from the South Australian and Victorian TAFE systems respectively. The sampling procedure and the low response rates have undoubtedly biased the data. It is not clear, however, what effect the relatively low student responses have had upon the validity of the data, and hence the resulting conclusions. Apparent biases will be discussed in appropriate sections of the results (section 3).

TABLE 2

Number and percentage response from the 16-19 year old students enrolled at a number of institutions in all three sectors of tertiary education. Institutions in 3 states were sampled. The population includes both off-campus and mixed mode students.

Institution/ Organisation	Type of institution/ organisation	Population size	Number sent	Number returned	Percentage response (%)
Deakin University	University	9	9	3	33
Murdoch University		93	93	35	38
Total University sample		102	102	38	37
South Australian College of Advanced Education	CAE	23	23	9	39
Gippland Institute of Advanced Education		85	85	24	28
Total CAE sample		108	108	33	31
South Australian Department of TAFE (Adelaide College of TAFE)	TAFE	1 181	200	45	23
Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network		2 395	372	64	17
Total TAFE sample		3 576	572	109	19
Grand totals		3 796	792	180	23

2.2.2 The questionnaire

The student questionnaire was prepared by the project staff and circulated to the Advisory Committee and others for critical comment. As a result of these comments the questionnaire was amended. The final version is presented in Appendix 1.

The questionnaire sought information in three specific areas: course information, reasons for choosing to study off-campus or mixed mode and personal details.

Course information

Eleven questions were included in this section. First, respondents were asked which course, and at what institution their off-campus study was provided (questions 1 and 2 respectively). Further questions were asked about the year they began their present course of study (question 3) and the expected year of completion (question 4). In addition, the number of course components or units required to complete the course and the number of those components or units which the student had already successfully completed were established (questions 5 and 6 respectively).

Respondents were also asked about the enrolment modes available for their course of study at the institution and which modes, of the alternatives given, were the students' actual and preferred modes of enrolment (question 7). They were also asked how they would choose to study further courses/units if they were given such a choice (question 11).

Details about the forms of instruction available to students (question 9) and the opportunities they have (and have taken) to make contact with tutors, counsellors or other students (question 10) were explored. They were also asked who advised them to choose off-campus study (question 8).

Reasons for choosing to study off-campus or mixed mode

In this section students were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing to study either off-campus or in mixed mode and how important each of these reasons was to them in making their decision. The possible reasons suggested in the questionnaire were drawn largely from previous research in the distance education area as well as suggestions from the Project Advisory

Committee. However the opportunity for students to specify any other reasons which may not have been included was also provided. By focusing on why students had chosen to study off-campus or in mixed mode this part of the questionnaire provided an opportunity to characterise the sub-groups of 16 to 19 year olds who study in these ways. This information may also highlight any special areas of need for the age group.

Personal details

This section asked students about themselves and their backgrounds to help determine what type of off-campus study provision might cater for their needs most appropriately. Questions asked of students included those about their current place of residence, their parental and their own educational background and socio-economic status. It also asked them whether they were currently in full or part-time work. They were asked about the nature of their work and how they perceived their current employment; that is, whether it was seen only as a temporary job, whether it had career potential, or whether it was relevant (for example) to their career.

The questionnaire concluded with an open section (question 28) which gave students the opportunity to provide additional details about studying off-campus or in mixed mode. In particular, positive features, any difficulties encountered and any needs which might be, but currently are not, being provided by the institution are given as a guide to areas on which students may wish to make further comment.

2.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF EXTERNAL STUDIES DEPARTMENTS

The questionnaire produced for distribution to Heads of External Studies Departments (Appendix 2) was developed by the project team. The draft questionnaire was discussed with a Head of an External Studies Department in a TAFE system and at a CAE to ensure that the questions asked were appropriate and answerable. Following amendment the questionnaires were prepared in the final form and mailed in early April, with a covering letter (Appendix 5) and reply-paid envelope, to 47 Heads of External Studies Departments in Universities, CAEs and TAFE. The mailing list used is appended (Appendix 6). A follow-up letter (Appendix 7) was sent some 2 weeks later. In early May non-respondents were contacted by telephone. A summary of respondents is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Table showing the response rate of Heads of External Studies Departments in the University, Advanced Education and TAFE sectors.

Sector	Number of Heads External Studies Departments authorities approached for information	Number of respondents	Percentage response
University	10	9	90%
Advanced Education	29	26	90%
Technical and Further Education	8	8	100%

The questionnaire gathered information about:

- the extent of participation of 16 to 19 year olds in off-campus or mixed mode studies;
- the extent of this participation in particular courses;
- the policy on entry requirements of the institution for 16 to 19 year olds and any quotas or restrictions on entry for the group and the reasons for these;
- lists of resources students may require to undertake the course and the means by which students are informed of these;
- whether the Heads of External Studies Departments believed that off-campus studies were suitable for 16 to 19 year olds and their impressions of the success of students in the age group who are enrolled off-campus or in mixed mode;
- the reasons 16 to 19 year olds give for choosing to study off-campus or in mixed mode and any differences between their reasons and those of older students;

- any existing special provisions in the area of learning support materials, delivery media, personal and academic support and other provisions for off-campus and mixed mode students. In addition, information was collected on the requirements of 16 to 19 year olds and whether there were any apparent differences in this group's requirements in these areas;

- the methods used to promote off-campus courses and their degree of success as well as the methods used to inform students about enrolment procedures and support services available.

The Heads of External Studies Departments were also asked to comment on the suitability of mixed mode study for 16 to 19 year olds. In addition, they were asked to describe the special measures which might be used to promote off-campus studies for this age group.

2.4 THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO STUDENT/COURSE ADVISERS

In the letter sent to Heads of External Studies Departments (Appendix 5) they were asked to respond to a questionnaire (Appendix 2). This questionnaire has already been discussed in some detail (see section 2.3). The information gathered from the Heads of External Studies Departments in this way was an important information source for the project.

To enhance the value of this information still further, Heads of External Studies Departments were asked to refer another questionnaire (Appendix 3) to a student counsellor/course adviser at their institution. This latter questionnaire was a shorter version of the one completed by the Heads of External Studies Departments.

Of the questionnaires directed to student counsellors/course advisors, 13 were returned completed. Of these, 2 were from staff at Universities, 7 from Colleges of Advanced Education and 4 from TAFE providers of off-campus studies. The respondents were drawn from 13 institutions.

2.5 THE STUDENT INTERVIEWS

The student questionnaire (Appendix 1) asked students to indicate whether they would be prepared to be interviewed. Of those 180 students who responded to the questionnaire, 69 (38.3%) indicated they would be willing to be interviewed and provided their names, addresses and contact telephone numbers. In all 6 students were contacted and all were interviewed individually by telephone. They were selected to reflect the range of sectors and states. In addition the sample tried to reflect both rural and city based off-campus students. Personal details of each of those interviewed are contained in the individual case studies (see Section 3:13).

An interview schedule (Appendix 8) was developed and used as a basis for the interviews. The schedule aimed to probe a number of the areas considered in the student questionnaire. Its aim was to gather qualitative information and impressions to enrich and amplify the quantitative data already gathered in the student questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

3.1 INFORMATION SOURCES

Information on the provision of off-campus studies for 16 to 19 year olds has been obtained from two major sources:

- staff - involving Heads of External Studies Departments and student counsellors/course advisers;
- students - by interview and questionnaire.

In addition, information from the literature has been gathered by the project team.

3.2 PROMOTION OF OFF-CAMPUS STUDIES

Table 4 outlines 10 methods by which off-campus studies are promoted. Respondents rated each of these methods according to their perceived level of success. It is clear (Table 4) that the least popular methods of promotion are TV and video tex. The latter, however, is a new medium. Promotional videos or posters were used to some extent, but were generally not seen as the most successful techniques.

Several techniques appear to be used extensively, and are considered quite successful. These are:

- promotional brochures;
- newspaper advertisements; and
- institutional handbooks.

Advertisements in specialist journals or publications, especially prepared handbooks and visits to schools are also relatively successful. However, some institutions cannot visit schools readily, or do not use the technique at all. Other institutions produce special handbooks for career counsellors at schools while some rely on their institutional handbook or other means of promoting their activities.

TABLE 4

This table provides details about the promotional activities undertaken by institutions catering for 16 to 19 year olds and the relative success of the techniques. One institution ticked more than one response category in three cases (to give the total of 23). Responses of individual sectors are indicated with the number on the left-hand side (U) being the number of responses in that category from universities. The next two numbers (C and T) are the responses from the CAE (C) and TAFE (T) sectors respectively. Totals are given underneath. A total of six universities, eleven CAEs and six TAFE authorities responded.

Method of promotion	Most successful	Successful	Least Successful	No Response	Total
Promotional brochures	3 + 2 + 2 7	2 + 6 + 3 11	0 + 2 + 0 2	1 + 0 + 1 2	22
Promotional videos	0 + 0 + 0 0	2 + 3 + 1 6	2 + 0 + 1 3	2 + 7 + 4 13	22
Advertisements in special journals/ publications	1 + 1 + 2 4	1 + 8 + 1 10	0 + 0 + 1 1	4 + 1 + 2 7	22
Promotional posters	0 + 0 + 1 1	3 + 4 + 1 8	1 + 3 + 2 6	2 + 3 + 3 8	23
TV advertising	0 + 1 + 2 3	0 + 1 + 0 1	0 + 0 + 0 0	6 + 8 + 4 18	22
Video tex	0 + 0 + 1 1	1 + 0 + 0 1	1 + 0 + 1 2	4 + 10 + 4 18	22
Visits to schools	1 + 4 + 0 5	2 + 3 + 1 6	1 + 0 + 2 3	2 + 3 + 4 9	23
Newspaper advertisements	2 + 2 + 4 8	3 + 6 + 1 10	0 + 2 + 0 2	1 + 0 + 1 2	22
Institution handbook	2 + 1 + 3 6	3 + 4 + 3 10	1 + 3 + 0 4	0 + 2 + 0 2	22
Handbook prepared specially for career counsellors at schools/ other educational institutions	2 + 1 + 3 6	1 + 4 + 1 6	0 + 0 + 0 0	3 + 4 + 3 10	22

The Heads of External Studies Departments who responded to the questionnaire cited a number of other promotional techniques. These included:

- promotional tours and meetings in regional centres (3 instances);
- radio advertisements (4 instances);
- direct mailing to specific groups (including recent matriculants, parents, employers, school counsellors etc.) 3 instances; and
- word of mouth (3 instances).

In summary, a wide range of techniques appear to be used to promote off-campus studies. Those which appear to be most successful are print-based and include brochures, handbooks and press advertisements. It is unclear from the data which techniques are most successful with specific sub groups - particularly 16 to 19 year olds. This question merits further investigation if distance education is seen as a viable and useful method of delivering tertiary programs to this age group.

3.3 EXTENT OF PROVISION

The Heads of External Studies Departments at 10 Universities, 29 Colleges of Advanced Education and the 8 TAFE authorities were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire (see Methodology and Appendix 4). Responses were received from 38 institutions or systems. These were in the form of completed questionnaires, letters or telephone calls. Details are provided in Table 5.

It is clear that a number of institutions in the higher education sector, particularly Colleges of Advanced Education, have no students in the age group enrolled or make no provision for off-campus study by 16 to 19 year olds. In this latter case a course offered (a Graduate Diploma for example) required the completion of a basic qualification as a condition of entry; in other cases, specified work experience was required. These requirements effectively precluded 16 to 19 year old students.

Tables 6 and 7 summarise the information obtained from the Heads of External Studies questionnaire.

TABLE 5

Number of institutions or authorities surveyed in the present study. The response rate and the number of institutions with provisions for 16 to 19 year olds is given.

Type of institution/ system	Total number surveyed	Number of non responding systems or institutions	Responses received	Number of institutions with no provision for 16-19 year olds	16-19 year old enrolled off-campus or or mixed mode
University	10	1	9	4[1]	6
Colleges of Advanced Education	29	3	26	15	11
TAFE college/system	8	0	8	2[2]	6

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[1] One institution officially does not permit 16-19 year olds to enrol off-campus. Nevertheless, this institution does have a small number enrolled in this mode.

[2] ACT TAFE has no off-campus provision. The Open College in the Northern Territory is presently being developed.

TABLE 6

The table shows the number of institutions surveyed and the estimated total student numbers by sector. It should be noted that some of the data presented respresents enrolment figures for 1985 or 1986. Nevertheless, the data have been combined to provide an estimate of total numbers enrolled at the responding institutions. It should also be noted that male, female and total student numbers do not always add up because the institution or authority concerned could not provide a breakdown on the basis of sex. One CAE did not provide enrolment data in their response. Other universities and CAEs responded to the questionnaire, but since they had no 16 to 19 year olds enrolled were not required to submit their total enrolment data.

Type of institution/ system	Number of institutions surveyed	Number responding with 16-19 year old students	Total Student Numbers						
			Off-campus			Mixed Mode			Grand
			Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Total
University	10	6	5 995	4 645	10 640	836	866	1 957	12 597
College of Advanced Education	29	10	5 364	5 577	20 960	811	572	1 658	22 618
TAFE	8	6	34 740	34 973	81 831	5 335	3 897	9 232	91 063
Grand Totals	47	22	46 099	45 195	113 431	6 982	5 335	12 947	126 278

The latest figures (1985) from CTEC available to our study (see p.2 of the present report) suggested that there were approximately 16,000 and 29,000 students enrolled off-campus at universities and CAEs respectively. The figures presented in Table 6 are those supplied by only 6 of the 10 universities and 11 of the 29 CAEs providing off-campus studies in one or more of their programs. Others, having no 16 to 19 year olds in their programs, did not provide figures for the present study. Therefore the total numbers presented in Table 6 clearly under-estimate total provision by both the university and CAE sectors. Nevertheless, TAFE is clearly the largest provider of post compulsory off-campus studies. Moreover, CTEC's 1985 figures show that TAFE had slightly over half the total provision. The present study suggests that the 6 TAFE authorities between them have about 82,000 students enrolled in off-campus studies, with a further 9,000 enrolled in a mixed mode. If correct, this represents an overall increase of some 20,000 places when compared with 1985 data, although mixed mode enrolments appear to have dropped. The present data (Table 6) should be interpreted cautiously, however, and some qualifiers about the data are set out in the heading for Table 6.

Table 7 is an attempt to estimate the numbers of 16 to 19 year olds enrolled either off-campus or in a mixed mode in the university, CAE or TAFE sectors. Notwithstanding the qualifying comments in the introduction of the table a number of trends are clear. These trends are that:

- TAFE is the major provider of off-campus or mixed mode study for 16 to 19 year olds. The average number of 16 to 19 year olds enrolled off-campus by the 6 TAFE authorities is about 1,796 students. The range of total off-campus enrolments for the 16 to 19 year old age group in TAFE is 68 to 3,721. Three of the 6 providers estimate their provision as in excess of 2,000 16 to 19 year old students. Two of the remaining 3 have in excess of 1,000 16 to 19 year olds enrolled off-campus;

- both CAEs and universities are relatively modest providers of off-campus or mixed mode studies for 16 to 19 year olds. Indeed, 412 of the estimated 657 off-campus CAE students who represent the 16 to 19 year old age group came from an estimate by one CAE of its provision for the age group. The 6 universities responding averaged 39 off-campus students each (the range was between 4 and 57). Ten of the 11 responding CAEs averaged nearly 25 off-campus 16 to 19 year old students each. If the estimate of 412 by the remaining CAE is accurate the average jumps to nearly 60 per institution. The range in off-campus provision for CAEs is between 0 (this institution had 2 mixed mode students) and 412 on the basis of the figures provided to us;

- mixed mode provision for 16 to 19 year olds is relatively small in TAFE in comparison to TAFE's off-campus enrolments;

- mixed mode enrolments for 16 to 19 year olds seem relatively equal for the university sector. Moreover, only one major university provider of off-campus studies failed to respond to the questionnaire;

- if the estimate of 412 off-campus 16 to 19 year olds is discounted, a similar trend to that of the universities is apparent (Table 7). The estimate of 412 off-campus students, if accurate, suggests that off-campus provision outweighs mixed mode. Only 3 CAEs did not respond to the questionnaire to Heads of External Studies Departments.

TABLE 7

The table shows the number of institutions surveyed, the number with 16 to 19 year olds enrolled, and the estimated total numbers by sector. Note that, in some cases, the data should be represented enrolment figures for earlier years (1985 or 1986). The data has been combined to provide an estimate of the total number of 16 to 19 year olds enrolled off- campus or in mixed mode. The data are broken down, where data are available, by sex and sector. In some cases the numbers of male, female and the total number of 16 to 19 year olds enrolled has been estimated by the institution or authority concerned because data were unavailable. Several universities who did not respond to the Heads of External Studies questionnaire may have 16 to 19 year olds enrolled either off-campus or mixed mode or both. The numbers however are not likely to be large. At least one institution (a TAFE college) was not confident that their data were totally accurate, with 8% of students either not supplying their birthdate, or supplying one which was obviously incorrect. There were similar concerns about the gender data supplied by this institution.

Type of institution/ organisation	Total number of institutions/ organisation	Number of institutions/ organisations providing data	Enrolments of 16 to 19 year olds						
			Off-campus			Mixed Mode			Grand
			Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Total
University	10	6	81	91	172	80	82	162	334
College of Advanced Education	29	10	59	68	657	68	66	210	867
TAFE	8	6	4 412	3 964	10 776	931	542	1 473	12 249
Grand Totals	47	22	4 552	4 123	11 605	1 079	690	1 845	13 450

3.4 QUOTAS AND RESTRICTIONS TO ENTRY

Most of the institutions responding (4/6 universities, 8/11 CAEs and 5/6 TAFE authorities) had some form of quota or restriction to entry. The quota could take three basic forms with the applicants:

- having to possess the required entry qualifications for a particular program; for example, successful completion of year 12 and the attainment of at least the minimum score required for entry to the program, an initial tertiary qualification or relevant work experience;
- falling within the number of places allocated for the program, that is, within the established program quota. The quota may be established externally to the institution (for example an imposed EFTS figure which has funding implications) or reflect internal limits on the resources available; and
- having particular attributes, for example, belonging to a particular gender or racial group or not being able attend oral classes.

Some courses have relatively low quotas, a high demand, or both.

About half the Heads of External Studies Departments (11/23) indicated that quotas were not different for off and on-campus students. However, 7 of 23 respondents indicated that there were differences, while 6 did not respond. One respondent ticked both 'yes' and 'no'. Those who indicated that there were differences pointed out that:

- there could be differences in the number of places allocated to off and on-campus students (that is, the size of quotas was different);
- some courses were not available off-campus, only on-campus (and vice versa); and
- students who could possibly attend the campus could only study off-campus with the permission of a senior member of staff (say a Dean or Director).

3.5 THE RANGE OF COURSES

The Directory of tertiary external courses in Australia, published by the University of Queensland, lists many of the courses and programs available in all 3 sectors of tertiary education. Inspection of the directory indicates that of the 10 universities, 29 CAEs and 6 TAFE authorities listed, these institutions or authorities offer a total of 115, 263 and 427 programs respectively; however these figures may not be entirely accurate and therefore must be interpreted with some caution. Some universities and colleges list courses and the major streams available as separate entries; for example Bachelor of Arts (Community Social Services); others only list Bachelor of Arts and indicate that several areas of major study are available. Other programs known to be offered are not listed in the Directory. The Directory serves, however, to give a very good idea of the off-campus provision in each of the sectors. What is clear, however, is that the 6 TAFE authorities together offer some 427 programs (numbers of programs offered range from 7 to 110 in different authorities). TAFE is therefore the most prolific and wide ranging provider of off-campus education in the tertiary sectors. TAFE's offerings eclipse those in both the CAE and university sectors who, together, have 39 institutions enrolling off-campus studies. However many of these providers offer a limited range of courses. Many of their programs concentrate on post initial or upgrading qualifications and therefore are not available to 16 to 19 year olds. Universities and CAEs in general offer Associate Diploma, Graduate Diploma, Bachelors, Masters (and even Doctoral Studies in the case of some universities), some in specialist areas. The range of courses and programs offered by TAFE on the other hand is very great indeed by comparison. The types of programs available will now be discussed sector by sector.

3.5.1 The university sector

The majority of off-campus students appear to be enrolled in Bachelors courses - usually in science or arts. A number were enrolled in other types of Bachelors programs, including:

- economics; and
- legal studies.

Two of the 6 institutions did not provide information about where their 16 to 19 year old students were enrolled. At one institution 18 of its 138 non-degree off-campus enrolments were aged between 16 to 19 years. Another indicated that it mainly offered courses which are post-initial qualifications and which therefore, automatically disqualify 16 to 19 years olds. In short, these students just haven't completed enough tertiary studies to enable them to enrol in such courses. Most of the enrolments by 16 to 19 year olds are in arts and science courses. These impressions are amplified by the student profile (see section 3.7).

3.5.2 The CAE sector

The range of courses cited by Heads of External Studies in this sector is wider than that of the universities. Students at CAEs and aged between 16 to 19 years are enrolled in Bachelors (UG1), Diplomas (UG2) and Associate Diplomas (UG3). The range of courses includes:

- Associate Diplomas in Arts, Liberal Studies, Business, Farm and Country Planning, Applied Science (Agriculture), Anagu Education, Aboriginal Studies, Computing, Engineering, Engineering Supervision, Emergency Care, Welfare Studies, Justice Administration (Police), Social Welfare, Biological Laboratory Techniques, Industrial Instrumentation, Applied Chemistry, Aquatic Resource Management and Information Services;

- Diplomas in Teaching in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Applied Science (Nursing) and

- Bachelors degrees in Applied Science, Arts, Business, Engineering, Education and Social Work.

The majority of the programs in which the 16 to 19 year olds are enrolled have a vocational base in teaching or business. However, the figures are not sufficiently comprehensive to indicate whether the majority of 16 to 19 year old student enrolments is actually vocationally based. It is clear, however, that significant numbers of these students are enrolled in vocationally oriented courses.

3.5.3 The TAFE sector

TAFE has both the highest numbers of enrolled students in the 16 to 19 year olds age group (Table 7) and the widest range of courses. The nature of TAFEs activities with the age group is also the most diverse. Those enrolled in off-campus or mixed mode studies at universities and CAEs would, in general, qualify normally for entry to such institutions. TAFE, however, has a responsibility which begins at the end of post-compulsory schooling. Its general studies program in off-campus offers a wide range of preparatory and bridging courses, including matriculation or its equivalent. Special purpose short courses are also offered. Students may enrol in individual subjects or a whole course. Thus the TAFE role in off-campus studies for 16 to 19 year olds may involve students who have completed their post-compulsory studies and have left school, those who are still at school in their post-compulsory years or those who have already matriculated and who might be eligible to enrol at a CAE or university. TAFE may involve students seeking vocational qualification or enrichment of their educational experiences.

In addition, the programs offered by off-campus studies in TAFE are of great variety. They may be non-award courses or they may lead to a statement of attainment. Special courses, which do not generally have educational or occupational entry requirements are also offered. Alternatively they may be vocationally based Trade and Post-Trade courses, or Certificate or Certificate based courses for technicians and others with middle level jobs. Post-Certificate and Associate Diploma programs are also offered. TAFE off-campus courses may therefore be for self enrichment (stream 1000) or they may be preparatory (stream 2000) or vocationally based (streams 3000 and 4000). Off-campus courses in TAFE may be quite short, involving 50 hours or less instruction. Others, usually at the Certificate or Associate Diploma levels, may require part-time enrolment of up to about 4 years. The equivalent instruction time may be approximately 1000 hours or more. A typical course at the Certificate level would involve the equivalent of about 800 hours of study. However, Certificate courses may involve somewhat lower equivalent hours.

The TAFE programs themselves can be categorised as follows:

- administration and business studies courses, such as accounting, teaching, bookkeeping, real estate, supervision and marketing;

- applied science courses, such as dental assistance, laboratory practices and conservation and resource development;

- engineering courses, such as civil or mechanical engineering, surveying, drafting studies, building, electronics or electrical engineering;

- rural studies programs, such as beekeeping, horticulture, pig raising, meat inspection, pest control and wool classing and testing;

- secretarial studies courses, including typing, word processing and shorthand as well as general office duties;

- trade courses, such as automotive, building, electrical, fitting and machining, hairdressing, plumbing, sheetmetal and welding;

- special courses, such as pilot's licence, Justice of the Peace, steam engine operation, sea and navigation courses and emergency first aid; and

- general studies courses, such as matriculation courses and preparation courses, preparatory trades, science studies, social studies, short story writing and spelling.

Sixteen to 19 year olds are involved in the entire spectrum of TAFE's off-campus offerings. Many are enrolled in preparatory courses or subjects in the general studies area. Significant numbers however, are enrolled in the mainstream Trade, Certificate and Associate Diploma programs. Detailed data are available from 3 of the 6 TAFE authorities. These data are based on 1986 or 1987 figures but will not be presented here for reasons of space. In addition to normal off-campus students, institutions in all 3 sectors may make specific provision for particular subgroups.

3.6 PARTICIPATION BY SPECIFIC SUBGROUPS

In general, off-campus studies departments seem to encourage participation by specific sub groups (Table 8). However, only 2 of the 6 universities responding indicated that they made any special provisions. The special groups encouraged included:

- Aborigines and Islanders (5 instances);

- geographically isolated (5 instances);
- the handicapped (including print handicapped) - 4 instances;
- women students (including women with small children) - 3 instances;
- students with literacy problems (3 instances);
- prisons and prisoners (2 instances); and
- ethnic groups with special English problems (1 instance).

Of these, the geographically isolated would constitute a sub group whose needs would normally be accommodated by off-campus departments specialising in off-campus studies. One university indicated that it normally did not allow students under 20 to enrol. Therefore any 16 to 19 year olds were enrolled under special circumstances.

A CAE indicated that its enrolment form had a section related to disadvantage which could be completed by the student. Such applications are received by the institution's Admissions and Assessment Committee who may admit the student without the normal admission criteria. A university indicated that Aborigines and Islanders had special quotas. Another institution making provision for Aboriginal enrolments had special off-campus centres staffed by a full-time tutor; others had special enclave programs and on-site lecturers or special tutorials, with a consultant appointed to assist Aboriginal students.

TABLE 8

Table showing the number of institutions in each of the 3 sectors of tertiary education who do, or do not, make special provision in their off-campus studies for specific sub groups of students.

Section	Attempt to encourage specific sub groups			
	Yes	No	No Response	Total
University	2	4	0	6
CAE	10	1	0	11
TAFE	4	2	0	6

The geographically isolated were supported in a number of ways:

- an institution acting on behalf of another tertiary institution interstate;
- the establishment of study centres;
- use of fax transmission;
- pre-enrolment seminars held in rural centres;
- establishment of self-help groups by regional liaison officers; and
- study skills courses.

One CAE provides packages of materials which enable the print handicapped to complete one of several degree programs offered through off-campus study. A TAFE authority indicated that one of its "briefs" was to provide special support for the disabled. One TAFE authority provided special programs for women and was attempting to remove barriers in its main stream programs. A CAE conducted a two year project which investigated participation and retention of women students. As a result,changes are being made at this institution to admission procedures, course advertising and student support strategies.

Almost no institutions mentioned specific provisions for 16 to 19 year olds, although one cited a study skills program funded by CTEC for 18 to 25 year olds. Indeed, most institutions appear to treat them in a similar manner to the "normal" off-campus group.

3.7 A PROFILE OF THE 16 TO 19 YEAR OLD GROUP

3.7.1 Introduction

The information presented in this section is intended to give the reader some feeling about the nature and background of 16 to 19 year olds who enrol either off-campus or in mixed mode in all three sectors of tertiary education. It is clear, however, that response rates have been relatively poor in the TAFE sector sample. Moreover, those responding from the university and CAE sectors have come predominantly from one of the two institutions sampled in each case. The numbers of CAE and university respondents are not high, 33 and 38 students respectively. The relatively short duration of the project (four months) and concerns by individual institutions about releasing the names and addresses of their students have undoubtedly affected both the quality and quantity of response received. Therefore the profiles which follow should be interpreted with some caution.

3.7.2 Age and sex

Tables 9 and 10 present information about the sex and age of the 180 student respondents. These data have been analysed by sector. The university and CAE respondents tended to be older than those from TAFE. Over 60% of both the university and CAE groups were aged 19 years. Very few were younger. However, a relatively large number of the two samples (9 in each case) had already turned 20, although none was older than 20. The TAFE group was more evenly distributed in age (Table 9). While 72% of the TAFE respondents were aged 18 or 19 years old, 29 students (27%) were aged either 16 or 17. Only 2 of the TAFE respondents were 20 years old.

The number of males and females was approximately equally distributed in the CAE and TAFE groups (Table 10). The university group of respondents contained a relatively high number of females. In the CAE group too, female respondents outnumbered males, however the ratio of males to females accorded well with previously published figures (see Anwyl *et al*., 1986).

3.7.3 Marital status

Analysis of the responses to the student questionnaire shows that the great majority of the respondents in all three sectors have never been married. In all 97% of university and TAFE 16 to 19 year olds responding indicated they had never been married; 88% of the CAE sample had never been married.

Only seven respondents in total (one from a university and three from the CAE and TAFE samples respectively) indicated that they were either married or cohabiting. One respondent from a CAE indicated that he/she was separated.

TABLE 9

Age distribution of the student sample by sector. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

SECTOR	Age - frequency					
	16	17	18	19	20+	TOTAL
University	0	2(5)	3(8)	24(63)	9(24)	38
CAE	0	0	3(9)	21(64)	9(27)	33
TAFE	17(16)	12(11)	35(32)	43(40)	2(2)	109

TABLE 10

The number of male and female respondents by sector. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

SECTOR	Sex - frequency		
	Male	Female	Total
University	11(29)	27(71)	38
CAE	15(46)	18(55)	33
TAFE	56(51)	53(49)	109

3.7.4 Social background

Table 11 shows that most respondents in all three sectors were Australian born. In general, approximately two thirds of fathers and between half and three-quarters of the mothers were also Australian born. The predominance of Australian born students and parents is apparent. The great majority of respondents indicated that English was the main language spoken at home (Table 11). Only eleven of the TAFE respondents and three and one of the CAE and university respondents respectively indicated that another language predominated at home.

TABLE 11

Country of birth of self and parents - student respondents.

Country of birth of self and parents - student respondents.

Country	Sector frequency								
	University			CAE			TAFE		
	Self	Father	Mother	Self	Father	Mother	Self	Father	Mother
Australia	32	26	29	31	22	18	99	67	69
Other	6	12	9	2	11	15	10	40	38
Not specified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Totals	38	38	38	33	33	33	109	109	109

Table 12 examines the highest education level achieved by the student respondents' fathers and mothers. The most highly educated group are clearly the parents of the university respondents. The TAFE and CAE parent groups appear relatively comparable. Table 13 examines the occupations of both parents and respondents. The parents of the university sample contains the highest proportion of professionals. The parents of TAFE respondents seem to be concentrated amongst skilled and semi-skilled workers or farmers and farm owners. In terms of their own employment, the highest proportions of students tend to be clerical or related workers, although seven of the 33 CAE respondents indicated that they were professionals.

TABLE 12

Highest education level achieved by students' parents. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Highest Education Level Achieved	Sector-frequency					
	University		CAE		TAFE	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Primary school	1 (3)	2 (5)	3 (9)	4(12)	15(14)	9 (8)
Some secondary school	11(29)	14(37)	15(46)	15(46)	41(38)	57(52)
Completed secondary school to year 12	3 (8)	2 (5)	3 (9)	3 (9)	8 (7)	17(16)
Trade/Certificate course	12(32)	6(16)	7(21)	4(12)	19(17)	8 (7)
Diploma or equivalent	1 (3)	10(26)	0	4(12)	10 (9)	6 (6)
Bachelor degree	4(11)	0	1 (3)	1 (3)	4 (4)	2 (2)
Higher degree	5(13)	4(11)	0	1 (3)	2 (2)	1 (1)
Don't know	1 (3)	0	3 (9)	0	3 (3)	0
Not specified	0	0	1 (3)	1 (3)	7 (6)	9 (8)
Totals	38	38	33	33	109	109

TABLE 13

Occupation of father, mother and self by sector. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Occupation/Sex	Sector frequencies								
	University			CAE			TAFE		
	Father	Mother	Self	Father	Mother	Self	Father	Mother	Self
Professional	11(29)	9(24)	2 (5)	2 (6)	9(27)	7(21)	17(16)	11(10)	3 (3)
Large scale employer/manager	2 (5)	0	0	3 (9)	0	1 (3)	3 (3)	1 (1)	5 (5)
Small scale employer/manager	4(11)	4(11)	0	7(21)	3 (9)	2 (6)	5 (5)	3 (3)	4 (4)
Intermediate non-manual worker	2 (5)	1 (3)	1 (3)	4(12)	1 (3)	2 (6)	2 (2)	6 (6)	13(12)
Clerical and related worker	2 (5)	13(34)	13(34)	0	2 (6)	5(15)	6 (6)	17(16)	33(30)
Clerical or skilled worker	8(21)	1 (3)	2 (5)	4(12)	2 (6)	1 (3)	28(26)	5 (5)	7 (6)
Semi-skilled manual worker	5(13)	2 (5)	8(21)	3 (9)	1 (3)	3 (9)	14(13)	12(11)	11(10)
Farmer/farm owner	2 (5)	1 (3)	0	5(15)	5(15)	0	19(17)	9 (8)	3 (3)
Don't know/ not applicable	2 (5)	6(16)	12(32)	4(12)	10(30)	10(30)	12(11)	39(36)	25(23)
Not specified	0	1 (3)	0	1 (3)	0	2 (6)	3 (3)	5 (5)	4 (4)

3.7.5 Schooling

Table 14 sets out the type of school attended for most of the students' secondary education. In the universities and TAFE, 74% and 76% respectively were educated in some form of state controlled school. Only 55% of the CAE sample were state educated. In all 45% of the CAE sample were educated in a catholic or independent non-catholic school; 26% and 19% were educated in this way in the university and TAFE samples. The majority of non-state school educated students sampled attended a catholic school.

TABLE 14

Type of school attended by students for the majority of their secondary education. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Type of school attended for most of secondary education	Sector-frequency University	CAE	TAFE
State High School	27(71)	15(46)	53(49)
State Technical School	0	3 (9)	11(10)
Area School	1 (3)	0	19(17)
Catholic School	8(21)	13(39)	19(17)
Independent Non Catholic School	2 (5)	2 (6)	2 (2)
Other	0	0	3 (3)
Not specified	0	0	2 (2)
Totals	38	33	109

Table 15 shows the location of the school. In the case of the TAFE and CAE samples the majority of students were educated in a rural town or provincial city; most of the university students responding were educated in a capital city. Since a very high proportion of the university sample attended Murdoch University, and were enrolled mixed mode (see Table 20), this result is, perhaps, not unexpected.

TABLE 15

Location of students' secondary school.

Location of School	Sector-frequency University	CAE	TAFE
Overseas	1 (3)	0	1 (1)
Australian capital city	26(68)	11(33)	32(29)
Australian provincial city	3 (8)	4(12)	23(21)
Australian rural town	7(18)	17(52)	48(44)
Other	1 (3)	0	0
Not specified	0	1 (3)	5 (5)
Total	38	33	109

The highest level of secondary education so far achieved by the student sample is presented in Table 16. All or almost all the 16 to 19 year old respondents from the university and CAE sectors had completed year 12. The two students in the CAE sample who had completed either year 10 or 11 were possibly examples of students admitted under special enrolment provisions. The TAFE sample was more diverse. The majority (79%) of respondents had completed either year 11 or year 12 (completion of year 11 is the normal entry point for many TAFE programs). However 21% had only completed year 9 or year 10. Some of these students may have entered apprenticeships. Alternatively they may still be enrolled at a secondary school and are taking TAFE subjects off-campus to enrich their school experiences, to enrol in subjects not available at their own school (or locally), or to give themselves advanced standing in an appropriate TAFE course after leaving school.

3.7.6 Employment

Table 17 presents information about the employment status of the 16 to 19 year olds who responded to the student questionnaire. At least half the TAFE (61%) and CAE (49%) students responding indicated they were in full-time employment. At least a further 10% were in regular part-time employment in each case.

TABLE 16

Highest level of secondary education successfully completed before starting present course. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Level	Sector-frequency University	 CAE	 TAFE
Year 9	0	0	1 (1)
Year 10	0	1 (3)	22(20)
Year 11	0	1 (3)	45(41)
Year 12	38(100)	31(94)	41(38)
Total	38	33	109

Relatively few (24% for CAEs and 18% for TAFE) were not employed at least part-time. By contrast 71% of students making up the university sample were in some form of employment. However their pattern of employment was evenly distributed between full-time, part-time regular and part-time intermittent. As the present report has already shown, the sample from the university sector was predominately from one institution and contained a relatively high proportion of mixed mode students. Thus these respondents may be more typical of an on-campus student group.

TABLE 17

Employment status of the students sampled. (Percentages are in brackets.)

Are you currently employed?	Sector-frequency									
	University			CAE			TAFE			
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	Total
Yes, full-time employment	5	4	9(24)	9	7	16(49)	32	34	66(61)	91
Yes, regular/permanent part-time employment	9	1	10(26)	2	2	4(12)	4	7	11(10)	25
Yes, intermittent/casual part-time employment	5	3	8(21)	2	3	5(15)	5	2	7 (6)	20
No, unemployed/seeking employment	2	2	4(11)	2	0	2 (6)	3	4	7 (6)	13
No, unemployed/not seeking employment	6	1	7(18)	3	3	6(18)	7	7	14(13)	27
Not specified	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4 (4)	4
Total	27	11	38(100)	18	15	33(100)	53	56	109(100)	180

Key: F = Female
M = Male
T = Total

The nature of the relationship between work and study is examined in Table 18. Generally few of those responding see themselves as both working and studying full-time. Most students responding from the CAE and TAFE sectors saw themselves as working full-time and studying part-time. Not surprisingly, these data (Table 18) correspond to the impression gained from Table 17. In contrast those responding from the university sector predominantly see themselves as working part-time - or not working, and studying full-time. This, again, is a reflection on the nature and make up of the university sample.

Finally, Table 19 examines the descriptions students had of their jobs (see question 27, student questionnaire, Appendix 1).

TABLE 18

The nature of the relationship between work and study perceived by the students sampled. (Percentages are given in brackets).

	Sector-frequency									
	University			CAE			TAFE			
Nature of Work	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	Total
Work full-time/studying full-time	2	1	3 (8)	2	0	2 (6)	4	7	11(10)	16 (9)
Work full-time/studying part-time	3	3	6(16)	7	7	14(42)	27	30	57(52)	77(43)
Working part-time/studying full-time	14	3	17(45)	4	5	9(27)	5	3	8 (7)	34(19)
Not working/studying full-time	7	3	10(26)	4	3	7(21)	5	9	14(13)	31(17)
Not working/studying part-time	1	0	1 (3)	1	0	1 (3)	6	4	10 (9)	12 (7)
Working part-time studying part-time	0	1	1 (3)	0	0	0	3	2	5 (5)	6 (3)
Not specified	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4 (4)	4 (2)
Totals:	27	11	38	18	15	33	53	56	109	180

Key: F = Female
M = Male
T = Total

TABLE 19

Students' descriptions of their job. (Percentages all presented in brackets.)

	Sector-frequency								
	University (n=27)			CAE (n=25)			TAFE (n=84)		
	True for me	Not true	Not specified	True for me	Not true	Not specified	True for me	Not true	Not specified
My job is mainly to earn money for non-educational expenses while I am studying.	20(74)	6(22)	1 (4)	8(32)	13(52)	4(16)	18(21)	52(62)	14(17)
My job is mainly to help with educational expenses.	9(33)	15(56)	3(11)	8(32)	12(48)	5(20)	6 (7)	63(75)	15(18)
My job is necessary to cover all my expenses.	15(56)	11(41)	1 (4)	9(36)	13(52)	3(12)	29(35)	41(49)	14(17)
ONly temporary job until I can obtain the work I really want.	18(67)	8(30)	1 (4)	8(32)	14(56)	3(12)	20(24)	50(60)	14(17)
My job is relevant to my career.	5(19)	20(74)	2 (7)	14(56)	8(32)	3(12)	51(61)	20(24)	13(16)
My job has definite career potential.	5(19)	21(78)	1 (4)	13(52)	10(40)	2 (8)	47(56)	23(27)	14(17)

The greatest number of students amongst the CAE and TAFE samples who were employed saw their jobs as relevant to their careers, and that these jobs had definite career potential. Rather less saw their jobs as only temporary. About one third of TAFE and CAE respondents saw their jobs as necessary to cover all their expenses. In contrast most university respondents saw their jobs as only temporary and as a means of earning money for non-educational expenses whilst studying. Just over half the university respondents (56%) felt their jobs were necessary to cover all their expenses. This confirms the impression that the university group therefore appears to be more typical of on-campus students studying full-time and this serves to illustrate the variety of scenarios possible with whole or partial study using the off-campus mode.

TABLE 20

Students' actual mode of enrolment. (Percentages are given in brackets).

Actual mode	Actual mode-frequency University n=38	 CAE n=33	 TAFE n=109	 Total n=180
On-campus full-time	1 (3)	1 (3)	0	2 (1)
On campus part-time	0	0	2 (2)	2 (1)
Off-campus full-time	4(11)	8(24)	21(19)	33(18)
Off-campus part-time	6(16)	14(42)	68(62)	88(49)
Mixed mode full-time	25(66)	8(24)	5 (5)	38(21)
Mixed mode part-time	1 (3)	0	8 (7)	9 (5)
Total number of indications	37	31	104	172

Note: Percentages are calculated on the basis of the total sample size for each of the sectors and (in the case of the totals column) as a percentage of the total sample (n=180).

TABLE 21

Students' preferred mode of enrolment. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Preferred mode	Preferences-frequency University n=38	 CAE n=33	 TAFE n=109	 Total n=180
On-campus full-time	21(55)	14(42)	6(15)	151(28)
On-campus part-time	1 (3)	2 (6)	18(17)	28(16)
Off-campus full-time	2 (5)	8(24)	18(17)	28(16)
Off-campus part-time	3 (8)	5(15)	32(20)	40(42)
Mixed mode full-time	8(21)	1 (3)	8 (7)	17 (9)
Mixed mode part-time	0	1 (3)	10 (9)	11 (6)
Total number of indications	35	31	102	168

Note: Percentages are calculated on the basis of the total sample size for each of the sectors and (in the case of the totals column) as a percentage of the total sample (n=180).

3.7.7 Modes of enrolment

Early questions in the student questionnaire explored available modes of study and students' actual and preferred modes of enrolment. A later question (question 11, Appendix 1) asked what mode of study students would choose if they had the option to do further courses or units. The data on available modes of enrolment were poor. Many students did not appear to be aware of the options offered by the institution or TAFE system. Accordingly, these data are not presented here.

Table 20 presents details of the students' actual modes of enrolment. In all 37/38, 31/33 and 104/109 students in the university, CAE and TAFE samples provided data. From these data, it is clear that the majority of university students responding were enrolled mixed mode and full-time. Only 10 of the 38 considered they were enrolled off-campus. Of these, six were studying part-time. In contrast the majority of TAFE students 68/109 (62%) were enrolled off-campus and part-time. A further 21% indicated that they were off-campus full-time students. The number of TAFE students enrolled mixed mode was limited. The CAE respondents, made up predominantly of students from Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, were enrolled off-campus and part-time (42%). Lesser numbers were enrolled full-time either mixed mode (24%) or off-campus (24%). Thus both the CAE and TAFE groups are predominantly enrolled off-campus; the majority of university respondents are actually enrolled mixed mode.

The preferred modes of enrolment are presented in Table 21. Most university and CAE respondents indicated that they would prefer to study on-campus and full-time. The next most popular preferred mode was mixed mode full-time and off-campus full-time for the university and CAE respondents respectively.

TAFE respondents presented a different picture. Although a total of 32% of respondents would prefer on-campus enrolment of some kind, 40% indicated that they preferred off-campus. Relatively few TAFE or CAE respondents indicated a preference for mixed mode studies.

When preferred future modes of enrolment were examined (Table 22), the university respondents were equally split between on-campus and mixed mode studies. CAE students indicated a preference for on-campus (16/33 or 49%); however 39% indicated a preference for the off-campus mode. The TAFE respondents favoured off-campus study (48/109 or 44%); the remainder were equally divided in their preferences between on-campus and mixed mode.

TABLE 22

Students' choice of mode for future study . (Percentages are given in brackets.)

SECTOR	Future mode of choice-frequency				
	On-campus	Off-campus	Mixed Mode	Not Spec'd	Totals
University	15(40)	6(16)	16(42)	1(3)	38
CAE	16(49)	13(39)	4(12)	0	33
TAFE	30(28)	48(44)	30(28)	1(1)	109
TOTALS	61(34)	67(37)	50(28)	2(1)	180

3.7.8 The profile - a summary

While the relatively low number of responses - particularly in the university and CAE sectors - cast some doubt on the validity of the profile gathered, it is clear that the profiles are in many respects, similar to those gathered in earlier and more intensive studies. In the CAE or university samples, an "average student" is 19 years of age, and unmarried. He or she would have completed 12 years of schooling - most likely in the country for CAE students, or the city for the university respondents. It is most likely that their secondary school would have been state controlled, although a large number of the CAE students who responded had attended a catholic school. The university respondents tend to have the most highly educated parents.

In contrast, TAFE students tend to be younger than their university and CAE counterparts. They are unmarried and have usually attended a state controlled school which was most likely to be in a rural town or provincial city. Their parents tend to be the least highly educated. The TAFE students, too, tend to have completed only up to year 11 - although a number of them may still be enrolled in a secondary school and are using a TAFE program or subject to complement their studies, or provide them with advanced standing for further studies.

Students from both the CAE and TAFE sectors tend to see their job as having both relevance to their career and definite career potential. Therefore, their studies are being used to complement or enrich their vocational experience and to gain qualifications which will enhance their careers. This suggests that their reasons for studying may not be all that dissimilar to those of their older off-campus colleagues.

Students in all three sectors tend to be Australian born, with parents born in Australia. English is the predominant language spoken in the home.

Enrolment preferences are varied. The university respondents tend to be enrolled mixed-mode full-time. They favour full-time on-campus study. CAE respondents prefer on-campus full-time study as well although the majority are actually enrolled as off-campus students. A number are also enrolled mixed mode.

TAFE students are predominantly enrolled off-campus. It is also their preferred mode, although 32% favour on-campus studies. TAFE respondents would generally choose the off-campus mode for future studies. On-campus and mixed mode studies received equal but lesser support from this group.

3.8 IMPRESSIONS OF SUCCESS OF 16 TO 19 YEAR OLDS

Heads of External Studies Departments and course advisers or counsellors were asked to give their impressions of the success of 16 to 19 year olds enrolled in either off-campus or mixed mode studies. It was suggested that their success be compared with that of older students or with students enrolled on-campus. Alternatively their success in different courses of study could provide grounds for comparison. The responses from Heads of External Studies Departments at 11 universities, 6 CAEs and 6 TAFE authorities are presented. In addition, information was provided by 9 course advisers, 2 each from the universities and CAEs and 5 from TAFE.

The general impression appears to be that 16 to 19 year olds are less successful than older students. Several respondents remarked, however, that the question was hard to answer, or that their student numbers were small and they therefore found it hard to form an objective opinion. Some felt that 16 to 19 year olds did at least as well as other groups. Others pointed to a relatively high drop-out rate which, they felt, reflected an inability to cope with the demands made by these modes of study.

The relative lack of success by 16 to 19 year olds is supported by the following comments:

> The university has not made such a study, there has been an impression that they perform less well. (University respondent.)

> The success rate as measured in student progress units indicates that enrolment of persons under 25 is less than that of persons over 25. Persons under 21 have even less success. (University respondent.)

> Not as good as the full-time on-campus group of the same age. But comparable to the part-time on-campus group. Attrition rate for part-time study for this age group is higher than for older students. (CAE respondent.)

> I believe they are less successful than more mature students. All our courses are career courses, and, with the exception of CBS (Certificate of Business Studies), Accounting course, most students are already employed within the appropriate industry. The incentives are probably less for 16-19 year olds. (TAFE respondent.)

> Objective data is not available. Teacher's subjective assessments in general suggest that students in this age group do not perform as well as older students. The self pacing nature of the material demands study skills and self discipline which most 16 to 19 year olds have not had time to acquire. (TAFE respondent.)

However, these views are not universal, as the following comments indicate:

> No systematic evaluation conducted. Generally success probably reflects motivation (how close to graduation, etc.) rather than commitment to mode. (University respondent.)

Finally:

> It should be noted that of a total of 816 males, 598 are apprentices, while of the 394 females, 47 are apprentices and a further 120 are enrolled in a Preparatory Nurses course, and there is a high success

> rate in these areas. The general impression in the other areas is that a lack of maturity and hence the self discipline necessary for distance education, results in less success than that enjoyed by older students. (TAFE respondent.)

Thus, while the general feeling obtained from reading comments by both Heads of External Studies Departments and course advisers is that 16 to 19 year olds are not as well suited to the off-campus mode as a number of other groups and, in particular, older students. However, this last statement must be recognised for what it is - a generalisation. It is clear that particular individuals and groups of 16 to 19 year olds are just as successful as other cohorts in studying either in the off-campus or mixed modes. This seems particularly so if they have the motivation needed and adequate support mechanisms. The suitability of both off-campus and mixed mode studies was therefore raised in questions to both the Heads of External Studies Departments and course advisers. The support mechanisms provided by the institutions or TAFE authorities are discussed in section 3.11. A student view is presented in section 3.12.

3.9 SUITABILITY OF 16 TO 19 YEAR OLDS FOR OFF-CAMPUS OR MIXED MODE STUDIES

3.9.1 Off-campus studies

The Heads of External Studies Departments and course advisers/counsellors were generally equivocal in their response to the question of the off-campus mode's suitability for 16 to 19 year olds. Of the 36 responses 11 felt it was suitable, 17 felt it was not while 6 offered no opinion one way or the other (3 of the 6 indicated that they did not have enough evidence to make a judgement either way). One did not respond to the question. Of the 10 TAFE respondents 5 were negative; 5 of the 8 university respondents were negative. The 18 CAE respondents were equally distributed, while a further 2 did not offer a firm opinion.

Many of the reasons given for 16 to 19 year olds' lack of suitability for the mode have already been presented in the previous section. These comments are enriched by those that follow:

> Since there are so few of these students (39) this must largely be an a priori observation. Off-campus study requires a high degree of ability to organise

> one's own priorities, time and activities. This is especially difficult for people in this age group, who are called upon at the same time to reorganise their whole lives to adulthood. (University respondent.)

> Lack of experience in tertiary study. Lack of maturity and life experiences to cope with a tertiary course. Comparative lack of support as against the on-campus student. (University respondent.)

> No evidence as we have not sought evidence. My view however, is that school leavers overwhelmingly are gregarious and need peer experience. Only with maturity comes the ability to study independently and draw on past experience. (University respondent.)

> There is a lack of objective data on this question. Subjective impressions are that 16 to 19 year olds lack study skills and self discipline in the self-pacing mode. (TAFE respondent.)

> On the sample (particularly mixed mode) in this institution such students would appear to have less motivation and less personal discipline regarding off-campus learning. However the sample is small and often consists of unsuccessful students (in terms of their previous studies). (CAE respondent.)

> Information is lacking in this area. My impression is that they are not suitable due to need to be very well organised and motivated to cope with a mode of study quite new to them. Generally 16 to 19 year olds have little appreciation of the problems they may face. (TAFE respondent.)

The concerns about the ability of 16 to 19 year olds to cope with the off-campus mode seem to focus around:

- the students' relative lack of maturity, past experience, motivation and self discipline;

- the difficulty of the transition from the structured learning experiences of primary and secondary education to the largely independent methods of learning required by off-campus students;

- the need the group has for peer and academic support and which on-campus studies are seen to be more capable of providing; and

- the critical psycho-social developmental period 16 to 19 year olds are passing through, and which is associated with their transition from youth to adulthood.

However,even although the comments cited above were negative the lack of hard evidence on which to base their judgements is clearly felt by a number of the respondents. Others clearly believe that off-campus can be a suitable, or at least admissable, mode for the age group:

> We do not subscribe to the time-hallowed view of the British Open University that school leavers and young adults are, by definition, incompetent independent students. Many Australians cope adequately with correspondence studies and in country-based apprenticeships. Many young on-campus students respond well to opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning . . . (University respondent.)
>
> Results indicate success." (University respondent.)
>
> There is no evidence to suggest that off-campus is less suitable than on-campus. (CAE respondent.)
>
> I have no evidence other than success of distance techniques for primary, secondary, TAFE and other groups in higher education. I do believe there are good reasons for late adolescents attending on-campus, however, . . . (CAE respondent.)
>
> . . . attrition rates for the [16 to 19 year old group] could be higher. Life style, motivation, peer group pressures, lack of thought and knowledge when enrolling . . . however, the motivated 16 to 19 year old student with positive attitudes and lifestyle will cope with off-campus studies as successfully as the motivated older students. We tend to forget that attrition rates for all students studying off-campus tend to be rather high. (TAFE respondent.)

Again the generally positive note sounded by these comments is tempered by the lack of objective evidence and the problem of generalising from limited information and impressionistic data.

The conclusion which must be drawn from this and the earlier information presented is that while 16 to 19 year olds enrolled off-campus may face more problems than their on-campus contemporaries or older off-campus students, it would be dangerous to generalise about whether or not the mode is suitable for them. Rather, the suitability of the mode depends, in the end, on the personal characteristics of the students themselves, their motivation to succeed, their circumstances and the extent to which they are supported personally by their friends, workmates and significant others - as well as by the institution at which they study. It would therefore be unfortunate if an institution's policy or staff actively discouraged 16 to 19 year olds who otherwise met the entry requirements for their programs. If they did so, their discouragement would appear to be based on very little hard evidence and, in fact, they may be doing a number of students in this age group a real disservice.

3.9.2 Mixed mode studies

The 36 respondents, comprising Heads of External Studies Departments and course advisors, considered the use of mixed mode studies more appropriate for 16 to 19 year olds than off-campus studies, although their opinions should still, at best, be considered equivocal. In all, 17 felt that mixed mode was generally suitable for 16 to 19 year olds, although 7 believed it was not. Five respondents gave no clear indication of their commitment either way. Three indicated the question was not applicable; three felt they had insufficient information to judge and one did not respond. Their greater support for this mode appears to be because it offers students the chance of obtaining the personal and academic support they may lack using the off-campus mode alone. Mixed mode study enables them to be on-campus at least some of the time, and this is believed to be advantageous for 16 to 19 year olds. The comments bear this out. One university respondent indicated that mixed mode was not suitable for 16 to 19 year olds, "but possibily more suitable than wholly off-campus study." Another felt it was:

> certainly better than complete external study, but I maintain school leavers generally want stronger assistance than the mode supplies. (University respondent.)

and

> Mixed mode is a useful provision for all students regardless of age. It provides far less dependence on didactic teaching and more control over the use of time whilst avoiding some of the logistical problems faced by far distant students. (University respondent.)

Others broadly felt that mixed mode was of potential value:

> I believe such study is applicable. However greater counselling/support service may be necessary to stimulate self discipline. (CAE respondent.)

> This arrangement provides excellent notes, a degree of self-paced learning and regular personal teacher support. (TAFE respondent.)

and

> I think it would be more suitable for them than off-campus study, because they would at least have some interaction with students and teachers, and they are familiar with this. (TAFE respondent.)

Other respondents discussed why mixed mode is used:

> The mixed mode category of enrolment is somewhat clouded by the fact that most people who do so are enrolled as full-time on-campus students taking the occasional off-campus course as a matter of convenience. (University respondent.)

> The [mixed mode] is only used in our institution to
> a) overcome timetable clashes, or
> b) extend the range of subjects a student can take.
> It works well for both ends. (CAE respondent.)

> . . . those who study mixed mode [for example, course not available elsewhere or at their local campus], the mode may be a second best for students faced with this situation - unless the situation is specifically structured to overcome obvious problems or, unless the student, in fact, has a preference for some off-campus study." (TAFE respondent)

Mixed mode is therefore used for convenience reasons; for example, to overcome the difficulties caused by timetable clashes or to enable a student to complete an outstanding subject in their course. The mode may also be used if the particular subject is not offered on-campus at the institution at which students are studying. In this way students can complete certain required subjects without having to move physically to take the subject on-campus somewhere else. Alternatively, the mode allows students to broaden their range of options by taking subjects which are of interest and value to them.

3.10 REASONS FOR STUDYING OFF-CAMPUS OR MIXED MODE

3.10.1 The views of Heads of External Studies Departments

Table 23 presents a summary of the reasons given by Heads of External Studies Departments for students choosing to study externally.

Three major reasons for using the mode emerged. Isolation was the principal reason cited. The isolation took the form of geographical isolation (living away from the place of study) as well as the desire to preserve one's lifestyle - for example, wishing to stay at home in a country area, but still study. Off-campus may be the only convenient way of studying a course. In such cases the isolation and employment factors may combine, because the student would have to leave employment (or gain leave of absence) in order to study the course on-campus. This could entail a move from the country to the city or possibly even interstate.The difficulty of commuting to a place of study is a related reason, as is a handicap or physical disability or imprisonment. The other major reason cited is as that employment, including shiftwork, restricted the range of options for study available. Employment was also clearly linked as a factor to that of financial security which it provides. An employer may also encourage or expect an employee to study. In the case of apprentices, study is a statutory requirement, but study may be difficult if their place of work is isolated from a provider of off-the-job training. Off-campus may therefore be the only convenient mode available. Finally (and particularly in TAFE) the course itself was only available by the off-campus mode.

The reason most commonly given for using mixed mode was to resolve timetable clashes (4/6 universities and 4/11 CAEs). Other reasons included using the mode as a means of controlling study patterns or for continuing to study when health reasons precluded other forms of study (for example full-time on-campus). It was also used to "pick up" odd subjects after the effective completion of a course undertaken on-campus.

Finally students who had failed subjects used the mode as a means of completing and passing these subjects whilst studying, working or both. Other reasons cited included secondary students enrolling in TAFE subjects or courses off-campus in order to broaden their on-campus studies at school, or to gain advanced standing in TAFE courses they might choose to study when they had completed their secondary education. Mixed mode enrolment could be forced on students when certain subjects were only available either exclusively on-campus or off-campus so that the student has to study mixed mode in order to complete their qualification.

The reasons for off-campus or mixed mode study cited by course advisers were similar to those given by the Heads of External Studies.

TABLE 23

Reasons given by Heads of External Studies for students studying by the off-campus mode.

Reason(s) for off-campus study	Sector-Number of instances			
	University	CAE	TAFE	Total
Geographical remoteness; isolation; living away from place of study; wish to stay at home; lifestyle; home duties.	5	5	10	20
Difficulty/danger of commuting; transport problems.	1	-	2	3
Employment, including shiftwork, precluding on-campus study; financial reasons.	3	9	5	17
Employer pressure/encouragement.	-	1	-	1
Course/subject not available orally (on-campus); course not available elsewhere.	-	2	5	7
Preference for learning mode.	-	-	2	2
Handicap/physical disability.	1	-	3	4
Inprisonment.	-	-	2	2
Exposure to tertiary study minimum risk.	1	-	-	1
Preference for Unemployment benefits rather than AUSTUDY support.	1	-	-	1

Respondents were also asked to indicate in what ways, if any, 16 to 19 year olds' reasons for choosing to study in the off-campus or mixed mode were different from those of older off-campus students. Of the 36 responses received (23 Heads of External Studies Departments and 13 course advisers or counsellors) 6 Heads of External Studies Departments and 5 course advisers/counsellors felt that there was no significant difference between the reasons 16 to 19 year olds have for studying off-campus and those of older students. A further 6 did not respond to the question. The remaining comments fall into a number of categories. The principal difference (10 instances) between older and younger off-campus students is seen to be that older students have work, social and family commitments which preclude other modes of study, or make off-campus the preferred mode. The preference is influenced by the flexibility of the mode. It is believed that 16 to 19 year olds do not, in general, have the same level of commitment to family and work. However two respondents (one from a CAE and another from a university) indicated that parents may discourage students from leaving home and therefore off-campus may represent their only viable option for continuing to study. One university respondent indicated that "older students tend to want upgrading for re entry to the workforce or seeking reclassification. Young students want a degree". Another suggested that:

> 16 to 19 year olds in my view, study externally of necessity. Twenty-five to 30+ study [by] necessity but also by choice, that is, they prefer the mode because of its economy and time.

The TAFE respondents' reasons were unique, partially because secondary students often enrol in their programs.

They point out:

> Some (16 to 19 year old students may study off-campus) . . . because the subject they wish to study is not available at their local schools. Others do so because they're fed-up with the traditional/regimented approach of schools. They find the ratio of students to teacher in off-campus advantageous. Some (perhaps the less mature) have the expectation that it will lead to immediate employment.

> A large percentage of 16 to 19 year old students are studying to gain access to higher education courses or to gain employment. Older students study for certification/licence for employment/promotion/personal development/pleasure.

Another TAFE respondent suggested:

> The largest number in the 16 to 19 group are apprentices and their continuing employment requires that they do the study . . ..

One of those already cited above continued:

> . . . (2) other 16 to 19 year olds would tend to study in different areas than other students, for example, commercial, preparation and matriculation etc, - courses which are vocationally orientated c.f. courses which upgrade skills of those already employed.
>
> (3) Other 16-19 year olds studying, say, Certificate courses in Business Studies would study for the same reasons as older students.

Thus in TAFE, 16-19 year olds can be studying off-campus:

- to gain entry to higher education;
- to enhance their job opportunities by studying vocationally related subjects or courses;
- to broaden the range of their secondary studies by taking TAFE subjects, because the subject may interest them or it may provide advanced standing in a TAFE course;
- because such study is a requirement of their employment (for example, apprentices);
- because their reasons for study are similar to those of older off-campus students.

3.10.2 Reasons given by students

Question 12 of the student questionnaire listed 24 reasons for studying off-campus or in mixed mode. Students were asked to rate each of these in terms of its significance to them. Space was also allowed for students to give their own reasons for study.

Table 24 presents a summary of the student responses which the highest number of students in all 3 sectors considered of some or, significant importance to them. Table 26 shows those reasons which were considered relatively unimportant by students.

Table 25 represents what might best be described as factors of some or median importance to 16 to 19 year olds.

The most important reasons:

There are 5 clear reasons for using the off-campus or mixed mode study (Table 24). These are:

- distance;
- preference for the flexibility the study modes provided;
- work commitments;
- financial reasons; and
- timetable clashes.

In this respect the reasons do not appear much different from those one might expect from a sample of older off-campus, or mixed mode students. In substance therefore, it appears that the reasons of most importance to many 16 to 19 year olds are similar to those given by students who are older, and considered more mature and settled. What might differ in a more detailed study (where the two groups are able to be compared) is the magnitude of the importance of each particular factor.

Distance from a campus is a traditional reason for choosing off-campus study and it appears important here. However, it is interesting to note that work commitments and financial reasons are also relatively important factors influencing the choice of mode. Traditionally (see Hore and West, 1985) these types of reasons have been ascribed to the more mature distance education students.

Many of the 16 to 19 year olds sampled by our survey seem to be making rational decisions about which mode of study best suits their circumstances. Many seem to value the flexibility their particular mode provides them. Many appear to have put work and financial security as a high priority, and their mode of study must accommodate their work and other priorities. _If_ off-campus is a second best method of study for 16 to 19 year olds, it is certainly a second best which many seem to need and choose. It leads us to speculate that an increasing number of school leavers may prefer to gain the security and lifestyle that work and its financial rewards provide rather than delay their entry to an apparently tight job market by studying full-time. Some students are apparently gaining access to an occupational or related area where they hope to make a career, and thus study to further their career and increase their options while gaining valuable experience (which will stand them in good stead). The student profiles, student comments in the questionnaires and several of the students' interviews support this scenario.

TABLE 24

Students' most important reasons for studying off-campus or by mixed mode. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

		Importance of reason-frequency					
Reason for studying	Sector	Signif. imp.	Some imp.	Little or no imp.	Don't know	Not spec.	Total
I lived too far away from campus	University	7(18)	4(11)	13(34)	13(34)	1 (3)	38
	CAE	9(27)	3 (9)	11(33)	10 (3)	0	33
	TAFE	48(44)	12(12)	19(17)	28(26)	1 (1)	109
I prefereed the flexibility of studying at home	University	11(29)	11(29)	10(26)	6(16)	0	38
	CAE	9(27)	6(18)	6(18)	12(36)	0	33
	TAFE	36(33)	40(37)	21(19)	11(10)	1 (1)	109
I preferred the flexible pace of study	University	12(32)	14(37)	5(13)	7(18)	0	38
	CAE	9(27)	7(21)	7(21)	10(30)	0	33
	TAFE	36(33)	40(37)	20(18)	11(10)	2 (2)	109
I could choose th pace at which I could study	University	19(50)	9(24)	4(11)	6(16)	0	38
	CAE	11(33)	7(21)	5(15)	10(30)	0	33
	TAFE	42(39)	36(33)	16(15)	13(12)	2	109
My work commitments prevented me from attending a campus	University	11(29)	5(13)	4(11)	18(47)	0	38
	CAE	9(27)	5(15)	7(21)	12(36)	0	33
	TAFE	39(36)	28(26)	14(13)	25(23)	3 (3)	109
I work full-time	University	8(21)	1 (3)	4(11)	25(66)	0	38
	CAE	14(42)	3 (9)	1 (3)	15(46)	0	33
	TAFE	42(39)	16(15)	12(11)	37(34)	2 (2)	109
I am studying off-campus because I have to support myself financially	University	9(24)	4(11)	5(13)	19(50)	1 (3)	38
	CAE	6(18)	4(12)	7(21)	16(49)	0	33
	TAFE	19(17)	16(15)	25(23)	47(43)	2 (2)	109
Timetable clashes made it impossible for me to attend classes	University	14(37)	5(13)	8(21)	11(29)	0	38
	CAE	8(24)	3 (9)	7(21)	15(46)	0	33
	TAFE	17(16)	10 (9)	24(22)	56(51)	2 (2)	109

Access to better materials seems equally important in all 3 sectors, but of most importance to the university group. There is a lack of preference, particularly amongst TAFE students, for on-campus studies. This is supported, to some extent, by their relatively higher preference for off-campus modes (see Tables 21 and 22).

TABLE 25

Reasons of some importance for studying off-campus or in mixed mode. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

		Importance of reason - frequency					
Reason for studying off-campus or mixed mode	Sector	Signif. imp.	Some imp.	Little or no imp.	Don't know	Not spec.	Total
The course was only available externally	University	3 (8)	0	8(21)	27(71)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	1 (3)	6(18)	22(67)	1 (3)	33
	TAFE	19(17)	11(10)	20(18)	56(51)	3 (3)	109
I didn't like the idea of studying on-campus	University	0	4(11)	18(47)	16(42)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	6(18)	14(42)	10(30)	0	33
	TAFE	7 (6)	18(17)	46(42)	36(33)	2 (2)	109
It was easier for me to get into the external course	University	3 (8)	0	8(21)	27(71)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	1 (3)	6(18)	22(67)	1 (3)	33
	TAFE	19(17)	11(10)	20(18)	56(51)	3 (3)	109
I have transport difficulties	University	2 (5)	3 (8)	13(34)	20(53)	0	38
	CAE	2 (6)	4(12)	12(36)	15(46)	0	33
	TAFE	24(22)	10 (9)	33(30)	40(37)	2 (2)	109
My employer encouraged me to study off-campus	University	4(11)	0	5(13)	29(76)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	4(12)	5(15)	21(64)	0	33
	TAFE	16(15)	9 (8)	21(18)	61(56)	2 (2)	109
Employment requirement for me to study off-campus	University	2 (5)	1 (3)	4(11)	31(82)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	2 (6)	4(12)	24(73)	0	33
	TAFE	19(17)	8 (7)	22(20)	58(53)	2 (2)	109
I can obtain access to better materials/ resources	University	2 (5)	7(18)	8(21)	21(55)	0	38
	CAE	2 (6)	4(12)	8(24)	19(58)	0	33
	TAFE	9 (8)	13(12)	30(28)	54(50)	3 (3)	109
There are too many contact hours on-campus	University	2 (5)	7(18)	14(37)	15(40)	0	38
	CAE	0	5(15)	12(36)	16(49)	0	33
	TAFE	6 (6)	17(16)	30(28)	54(50)	2 (2)	109

Finally timetable clashes in particular are an important reason for using mixed mode study. The university sample, drawn largely from one institution (Murdoch) and with a high mixed mode population (Table 20) clearly indicates the use of off-campus studies as a means of resolving the timetable difficulties they experience as full-time on-campus students. Alternatively they use the mode as a means of fitting their on-campus studies around their work - and those subjects which cannot be readily accommodated by on-campus study are taken off-campus. The factor is of some importance in the CAE sample too - for similar reasons no doubt.

Other reasons of some importance:

Table 25 shows the reasons for studying off-campus or in mixed mode which are of some importance to students. They include:

- difficulties with transport;
- employer encouragement or employment requirements; and
- easier access to the course.

All these appear to be significant for TAFE students. Access, unless students belong to a specific sub group, is less likely to be an issue for university and CAE students since they usually have to meet the normal requirements for enrolment in a specific course. It does appear to be of some significance for the TAFE group as 27% of respondents have rated it as being significantly important or of some importance. Likewise many TAFE courses (for example apprenticeships) are part of an employment requirement. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the factor should be identified. Employer encouragement seems to be a factor in all 3 sectors, TAFE, CAE, and to a lesser extent university. Transport difficulties seem to be a particular problem with the TAFE sample. Their relatively younger age students (Table 10) may contribute much to explaining the relative importance of this reason.

Other factors, which are predominantly ranked as having some importance are:

- access to better materials;
- not liking the idea of studying on-campus; and
- the high number (too many) of contact hours on-campus.

Finally, off-campus study can be used to reduce actual on-campus contact hours, allowing time for full or part-time work. This, and other reasons, might contribute to the use of off-campus to reduce or eliminate contact hours. However, it may not be the contact hours per se, but rather their distribution. Hence off-campus is used as means of concentrating on-campus study into a more manageable block.

The least important reasons:

Those reasons of no great importance, at least to our sample, included (Table 26):

- having a disability;
- being a resident of an institution;
- having units of their course only available at another campus of a multicampus institution;
- being isolated by personal or social circumstances or having a family not in favour of full-time on-campus study; and
- working part-time or shifts.

Of these, working part-time or shift work, particularly for university students, are significant factors. This is possibly because the university sample has relatively higher proportions of students employed in intermittent or regular part-time work (Table 26). Social isolation is another factor which stands out as one of greater significance amongst these relatively unimportant reasons for studying off-campus. Although these reasons did not stand out as being of particular importance in the present study, they may be of more significance if a wider group was sampled. If nothing else they are important reasons in that a number have significant implications in terms of offering equality of educational opportunity.

3.11 EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR STUDYING OFF-CAMPUS

Questions 2.1 and 2.2 of the Heads of External Studies questionnaire (Appendix 2) asked about the existing special provisions for off-campus or mixed mode students in the areas of:

- learning support materials;
- delivery media;
- counselling - personal support;
- academic support; and
- any other provisions.

TABLE 26

Reasons of some importance for studying off-campus or in mixed mode. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

		Importance of reason-frequency					
Reason for studying off-campus or mixed mode	Sector	Signif. imp.	Some imp.	Little or no imp.	Not applicable	Not spec.	Total
I have a disability which made it difficult to study by other means	University	0	0	6(16)	32(84)	0	38
	CAE	0	0	8(24)	25(76)	0	33
	TAFE	1 (1)	1 (1)	21(19)	84(77)	2 (2)	109
I work part-time	University	4(11)	4(11)	7(18)	23(61)	0	38
	CAE	2 (6)	4(12)	3 (9)	24(73)	0	38
	TAFE	6 (6)	6 (6)	14(13)	79(72)	4 (4)	109
I work shifts	University	5(13)	0	4(11)	29(76)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	2 (6)	2 (6)	26(79)	0	33
I am isolated by personal/ special circumstances (e.g family commitments)	University	4(11)	2 (5)	4(11)	28(74)	0	38
	CAE	1 (3)	3 (9)	7(21)	22(67)	0	33
	TAFE	8 (7)	9 (8)	27(25)	62(57)	3 (3)	109
I am a resident of an institution (e.g.prison hospital, etc)	University	0	0	4(11)	34(90)	0	38
	CAE	0	1 (3)	4(12)	28(85)	0	33
	TAFE	0	1 (1)	15(14)	91(84)	2 (2)	109
I am unable to attend an additional campus where institution has a number of campuses	University	0	1 (3)	6(16)	31(82)	0	38
	CAE	2 (6)	1 (3)	4(12)	26(79)	0	33
	TAFE	5 (5)	3 (3)	19(17)	80(73)	2 (2)	109
My family is not in favour of me studying full-time on campus	University	1 (3)	0	6(16)	31(82)	0	38
	CAE	3 (9)	0	6(18)	24(73)	0	33
	TAFE	3 (3)	5 (5)	20(18)	79(73)	2 (2)	109
Course/courses unit only available on another campus of a multi-campus institution	University	2 (5)	0	6(16)	30(79)	0	38
	CAE	0	0	4(12)	28(85)	1 (3)	33
	TAFE	5 (5)	2 (2)	18(17)	81(74)	3 (3)	109

Respondents were also asked whether these provisions were different in any way for 16 to 19 year olds from those of off-campus or mixed mode students in general.

3.11.1 Learning support materials

The learning support materials provided, generally concentrate on the print media - for example, printed lecture materials, subject outlines, readings, time management advice, guides to study, study skills booklets, essay writing guides, handbooks, library resources available by phone or mail, text book lists, slides, maps, charts and science, language and practical kits. In addition, audio and videotapes as well as computer-assisted learning packages are used to provide learning support. The materials are focussed on general study skills and those which specifically support the particular subject or course.

3.11.2 Delivery media

The mail is the most commonly used delivery medium for off-campus materials. Others mentioned include:

- teleconferencing and telephone tutorials;
- FM subcarrier radio tutorials;
- telephone facsimile;
- electronic mail;
- teletutorials and TV broadcasts;
- satellite links;
- personal visits by staff; and
- regional or central seminars, workshops or laboratory classes.

Print, video and audiotapes are also seen as common media.

3.11.3 Consulting - personal support

Most institutions either had a specific student counselling service, or an academic or teacher who acted as a counsellor. In some cases these counsellors were located in a region for use by "local" students; in other cases these staff are located centrally. Two institutions indicated that such support was available, but only on request. Further institutions used orientation sessions and a regular newsletter, amongst other things. A number of institutions provide toll-free facilities so that students can dial in from anywhere for the cost of a local call.

3.11.4 Support - academic

Academic support is provided by libraries, course and unit (or subject) coordinators as well as local liaison staff and part-time lecturers who are regionally based. Regional visits by academic, study skills and teaching staff are also used. Residential schools, campus sessions and telephone links (including teleconferencing) are used to provide support.

3.11.5 Other provisions

Most of the provisions mentioned here have already been described. Two provisions not already mentioned include one university which has a course development unit for external teaching and teachers. One CAE has a student union which provides a student liaison officer to service the needs of external students.

3.11.6 Specific provisions for 16 to 19 year olds

Twenty-two of the 23 Heads of External Studies Departments responding to our questionnaire indicated that their current provisions for 16 to 19 year olds were no different from those for their other students enrolled either off-campus or in mixed mode. Nevertheless question 4 of the questionnaire (see appendix 2) asked them to consider what specific needs 16 to 19 year old off-campus/mixed mode students may require in each of the areas specified above. Their responses follow.

The responses contain a number of general thrusts. Broadly the Heads of External Studies Departments felt that:

- 16 to 19 year olds may require a greater level of personal and academic support, including contact by telephone, letter, local mentors and local support groups of students.

  In short, the courses catering for these students need to be more interactive and a variety of techniques need to be employed;

- the group may tend to be slower than older students in asking for help; and

- a greater and more diverse range of learning media and materials may be required for this group. The materials may have to place more emphasis on arousing student interest and developing skills - including skills in studying and independent learning. Assignments may need to

> be shorter, but more frequent. Materials may have to be more specific, directive and pitched at an appropriate level.

Nevertheless several other quotes are worthy of note. Two respondents commented that there were really no specific differences between 16 to 19 year olds and other groups using off-campus study. One suggested:

> Most mature aged students face similar challenges to the 16 to 19 year old age group. The support materials and services should ensure that clear guidance and assistance is given to assist all groups of students overcome any difficulties they have with the academic program. (CAE respondent.)

The other noted:

> This list [of special provisions] really doesn't differ from one I would prepare for 50 year old students. I think that what they have in common [pressure of other commitments] may be more significant than how they differ.

Nevertheless, one TAFE respondent's general impressions were that:

> "16 to 19 year olds are less experienced and less well equipped to manage independent study, consequently support is much more important. The general view is that this support must be more intensive, more directive and more specific than with older age groups".

Another TAFE respondent summarised things this way:

> The present service is a compromise to provide something that is adequate with very limited resources. For higher service rates all areas listed need to be improved, but human and financial resources will determine the service.

3.11.7 Support and personal contact

Question 1.8 of the Heads of External Studies questionnaire asked:

> In general, are off-campus and mixed mode students and lecturers at your institution encouraged to make personal contact with one another to seek/provide support, information and advice when needed?

They were also asked to describe how the system worked.

Almost all institutions indicated that such encouragement was provided. The only exception were 2 of the universities responding. A variety of mechanisms for communication were mentioned. These included:

- telephone calls to and from institution staff (11 instances);
- teletutorials and teleconferences (6 instances);
- contact, especially telephone calls with other students (2 instances);
- 24 hour answering service for students (1 instance);
- letters to students (1 instance);
- submission of assignment work and feedback by teaching staff (1 instance);
- self-help lists dispatched with course materials (list of names of students who have given approval for their personal details to be distributed to other students) - 4 instances);
- self-help tutorial groups (1 instance);
- study groups established from geographic rolls (5 instances);
- support from students living close by (1 instance);
- regional visits by institution staff (4 instances);
- introductory lectures in regional centres (1 instance);
- orientation evenings in regional centres (1 instance);
- use of regional liaison officers (3 instances);
- compulsory residential schools (1 instance);
- informal groups encouraged during residential schools (1 instance);

- voluntary weekend study schools (2 instances);
- newsletters (2 instances);
- special tutorial/counselling sessions (mixed mode students) - 1 instance; and
- attendance at lectures when on-campus (mixed mode students) - 1 instance.

Clearly, a wide range of communication methods is used. However, the ways and extent to which each of these methods are used differs from institution to institution. (The use or lack of) communication methods depend on the resources available at each institution and the inclinations of its staff - as well as the characteristics of the particular student group enrolled. In short, some institutions are able to - or want to - put more effort into establishing and maintaining communication networks. Students too, vary in their use of these mechanisms and so their availability does not necessarily suggest that the services will be extensively used. This question of the media and resources available, and their use, will now be considered from the students' perspective.

3.12 SUPPORT - THE STUDENT VIEW

The support 16 to 19 year old students receive in studying off-campus will be examined from four perspectives:

- who advised them to choose to study off-campus;
- the forms of instruction used in the course/unit they were studying;
- the opportunities available, and taken to contact lecturers, fellow students, course advisor or counsellor; and
- student comments about support.

3.12.1 Sources of advice

The sources of advice used by students in choosing the off-campus mode are summarised in Table 27. While no one source dominated, a consistent trend was apparent. Students from all three sectors tended to rely on the advice of parents and friends. Another source was "self", with 7, 8 and 23 instances by 16 to 19 year olds from university, CAE and TAFE sectors respectively. TAFE students indicated that their employer was also a source of advice. This source was not so apparent amongst CAE and university respondents however.

TABLE 27

Source of advice to students about off-campus study.

Source of advice	Sector Frequency								
	University			CAE			TAFE		
	Yes	No	Not Spec.	Yes	No	Not Spec.	Yes	No	Not Spec.
Parents	4	32	2	7	22	4	23	65	21
Friends	9	27	2	8	20	5	20	69	20
Potential employer	0	36	2	3	25	5	4	80	25
Employer	2	34	2	5	23	5	27	63	19
Counsellor	6	30	2	5	24	4	15	73	20
Career advisor	2	34	2	5	23	5	9	75	24

Other sources listed included self with 7, 8 and 23 instances (38 instances in all).

3.12.2 Forms of instruction used

Table 28 sets out nine different forms of media or support mechanisms commonly used in off-campus studies. These include print material, video and audio tapes as well as the telephone, face-to-face visits by tutors, regional study groups, summer schools, style manual etc.

Print is clearly the most commonly used medium of delivery. The telephone is widely used also, with an average of 45% of students indicating it was used in their course or unit. Computer-managed or assisted instruction and teleconferences seem to be relatively uncommon media (Table 28).

TAFE appears to use mainly print and the telephone. Other media and methods of support appear to be used infrequently. However, other media or support mechanisms are quite common in the universities CAEs or both. The university sector, represented principally by Murdoch, appears to make very frequent use of audio tape, and some use of face-to-face visits by the tutor, or summer schools (or other time spent on-campus). The CAE sector, represented principally by Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, makes use of a wide range of media and support mechanisms, including:

- video and audio tape;
- regional study groups;
- face-to-face visits by tutors;

and in particular:

- summer schools or time spent on-campus.

Thus, between them, the institutions and systems make use of wide range of communication and support media, although they still appear to be concentrated particularly on print for materials delivery and the telephone for support and feedback. From the evidence here it is probable that the media and support mechanisms used vary from course to course and from institution to institution. Wider sampling and higher response rates would be required to clarify the picture further. However if the general beliefs of the Heads of External Studies are true, there may be a need to make more extensive use of existing media. Students' free response comments (section 3.12.4) in the questionnaire suggest the need to improve the ways in which the media and communication mechanisms are used. Students also have to be aware of what media and communication mechanisms are available to them and then - of course - be prepared to use them.

TABLE 28

Forms of media used in off-campus study and their relative use. (Percentages of the frequencies data are given in brackets.)

Medium	Sector	Used in course/unit-frequency			Total
		Yes	No	Not Specified	
Printed study materials	Uni.	37(97)	1(3)	0	38
	CAE	33(100)	0	0	33
	TAFE	109(99)	0	1(1)	109
Telephone	Uni.	19(50)	18(47)	1(3)	38
	CAE	14(42)	16(49)	3(9)	33
	TAFE	37(34)	59(54)	13(12)	109
Audio tapes	Uni.	27(71)	7(18)	4(11)	38
	CAE	11(33)	18(55)	4(12)	33
	TAFE	13(12)	79(73)	17(16)	109
Face-to-face visits by tutor	Uni.	10(26)	26(68)	2(5)	38
	CAE	8(24)	21(64)	4(12)	33
	TAFE	9(8)	83(76)	17(16)	109
Regional study groups	Uni.	3(8)	29(76)	6(16)	38
	CAE	13(39)	17(52)	3(9)	33
	TAFE	6(6)	83(76)	19(17)	109
Summer schools or time spent on-campus	Uni.	8(21)	26(68)	4(11)	38
	CAE	20(61)	9(27)	4(12)	33
	TAFE	5(5)	84(77)	20(18)	109
Videotape	Uni.	6(16)	27(71)	5(13)	38
	CAE	9(27)	19(58)	5(15)	33
	TAFE	3(3)	86(79)	19(17)	109
Tele-conference	Uni.	3(8)	32(84)	3(8)	38
	CAE	3(9)	25(76)	5(15)	33
	TAFE	4(4)	85(78)	20(18)	109
Computer-managed/ assisted instruction	Uni.	1(3)	33(87)	4(11)	38
	CAE	3(9)	25(76)	5(15)	33
	TAFE	1(1)	89(82)	19(17)	109
Other	Uni.	3(8)	19(50)	16(42)	38
	CAE	3(9)	13(39)	17(52)	33
	TAFE	3(3)	78(72)	28(26)	109

3.12.3 Opportunities for contact

Question 10 of the student questionnaire (Appendix 1) sought information about the opportunities for contact which were available and taken. This information is summarised in Table 29.

The great majority of 16 to 19 year olds in all three sectors believed they were given the opportunity to contact their lecturer or teacher. On average, 87% believed the opportunity was available, whilst an average of 61% took the opportunity to make such contact.

Over 75% of the university and CAE respondents indicated that they made contact with their fellow students. However only 42, or 39% of TAFE students indicated that the opportunity was available; only 20% indicated that they actually did make contact. In contrast, 82 of the 94 CAE respondents indicated that they contacted their fellow students while 17 of the university sample made such contact. Student networks seem to be particularly strong amongst the CAE respondents and relatively weak in TAFE.

There was a strong recognition of the opportunities to contact course advisers amongst university and CAE respondents. Only 49 (45%) of the TAFE respondents indicated that such opportunities were available. The opportunities for contact, although recognised, were not taken up as strongly as other contact points (tutor and/or fellow students) by 16 to 19 year olds in any of the three sectors. It is likely that the services of a course advisor are only required periodically, and therefore less use is made of their services than the more immediately useful contact with the lecturer or teacher - or their fellow students.

Opportunities to contact counsellors were seen as available by well under half of the respondents from the university and TAFE sectors. In the CAE sector only 19 (58%) indicated such opportunities for contact existed. This figure is low when compared to the perceived availability of other groups. Use by students from all three sectors was minimal (Table 29).

TABLE 29

Opportunities available and taken for students to interact with staff and their fellow students. (Percentages are given in brackets.)

Opportunities for contact with:	Sector	Opportunities Available/ Taken	Student Response - frequency				Total
			Yes	No	Not Appl.	No Response/ not specified	
Lecturer/Teacher	Uni.	Available	36(95)	2(5)	0	0	38
		Taken	24(63)	12(32)	0	2(5)	38
	CAE	Available	31(94)	2(6)	0	0	33
		Taken	26(79)	7(21)	0	0	33
	TAFE	Available	89(82)	15(14)	4(4)	1(1)	109
		Taken	59(54)	47(43)	0	3(3)	109
Fellow students	Uni.	Available	29(76)	8(21)	1(3)	0	38
		Taken	17(45)	19(50)	0	2(5)	38
	CAE	Available	31(94)	1(3)	1(3)	0	33
		Taken	27(82)	6(18)	0	0	33
	TAFE	Available	42(39)	39(36)	22(2)	6(6)	109
		Taken	30(28)	70(64)	0	9(8)	109
Course advisor	Uni.	Available	29(76)	2(5)	7(18)	0	38
		Taken	12(32)	24(63)	0	2(5)	38
	CAE	Available	28(84)	2(6)	3(9)	0	33
		Taken	19(58)	14(42)	0	0	33
	TAFE	Available	49(45)	26(24)	27(25)	7(6)	109
		Taken	24(22)	74(68)	0	11(10)	109
Counsellor	Uni.	Available	14(37)	6(16)	17(45)	1(3)	38
		Taken	5(13)	29(76)	0	4(11)	38
	CAE	Available	19(58)	2(6)	12(36)	0	33
		Taken	6(18)	25(76)	0	2(6)	33
	TAFE	Available	22(20)	27(25)	52(48)	8(7)	109
		Taken	6(6)	92(84)	0	11(10)	109

3.12.4 Student comment

Many students made comments relating to the off campus mode and their preference for it - or another mode in their responses to the questionnaire. A general observation is that the 16 to 19 year olds, as a group, have mixed feelings about the mode. Many see off-campus as wholly satisfactory. Others see it as not entirely satisfactory, but recognise that it is, on balance, the most appropriate mode of study available to them. Many commented on the support they received, or did not receive. These comments were made in justifying their mode of preference, in describing the positive features, and difficulties in, their off-campus or mixed mode studies. A number also described the needs they had which their institution did not meet.

Many of the comments were concerned with the relative isolation felt by off-campus or mixed mode students:

> More adequate for study on-campus where facilities and lecturers can be used more readily. (Mixed mode student, CAE.)

and

> [on-campus chosen as preferred option] for lecturer support and support from friends. (Mixed mode student, CAE.)

Because of its ease, the access to facilities and the personal contact with staff and fellow students, on-campus was seen as the preferred option by many - particularly the university and CAE samples. However a number saw mixed mode as a suitable compromise, or even preferable, because it provided a measure of freedom and an opportunity for the intellectual and social interaction of on campus studies. However many preferred off-campus study. The following comment is typical:

> It [off-campus study] gives me more opportunity to go out, to study at my own leisure and pace and to stay with my family. (Off-campus student, CAE.)

Some of the disadvantages reported for off-campus studies include:

- difficulty in contacting lecturing/teaching staff. Things cannot be explained readily and problems and questions cannot be readily resolved;
- little or no interaction with other students;
- delays in receiving materials;
- materials provided are not always clear;
- difficulty in maintaining motivation;
- no one to go to when counselling needed;
- obtaining books and listed resources. Limited access to library resources;
- cost of STD phone calls;

- wider range of resources needed - audio and video tapes, teleconferences etc.;

- more guidelines about assignments.

Much of this can be overcome if there are wider and more available sources of support.

On the other hand many students were very positive about their experiences as off-campus or mixed mode students. Freedom and flexibility were seen to be of great advantage. Having a job and a future enhanced by study seemed to provide tangible and moral support to many. Friends, family and workmates provided the social support they needed.

Students remarked:

> [Off-campus study offers] More flexibility of timetable, more security and familiar surroundings. (Off-campus student, CAE.)
>
> I feel that studying externally has helped improve my grades, primarily because I have no comparison to make with the grades of other students . . . therefore I don't or can't get discouraged . . . I can work to the best of my ability without feeling threatened, which has resulted in greater satisfaction in my grades. (Off-campus student, TAFE.)

and:

> I am very impressed with my course. I think they are set out well and there is not much room for improvement. (Off-campus student, TAFE.)

Like most students the present sample of respondents see both positive and negative aspects in their mode of study - and the support they receive from the institution at which they are enrolled. Whilst they have identified a number of ways in which support could be improved, it would be fallacious to imagine that the entire responsibility for support rests with the institution. Indeed it is clear that many of those sampled (particularly CAE and TAFE students) have a preference for the mode (see Tables 18 and 19) and see in it and their particular social circumstances a greater level of support and security than that which would be provided by other means of study.

3.13 STUDENT INTERVIEWS - SIX CASE STUDIES

3.13.1 Introduction

A small number of student interviews were undertaken in order to explore more closely the reasons for choosing to study off-campus and to determine if any special needs for curriculum, delivery, counselling or support were necessary for this group. These students were selected from the range of institutions which were sampled in the student questionnaire. They were also part of a group of students who chose to provide their names and contact addresses should an additional follow-up be required. The student questionnaire was prepared and used mainly for the purpose of discovering the reasons for choosing to study off-campus.

Six students were interviewed and the following picture was built up from the information. The names are fictitious.

3.13.2 The students

Student 1.

Name:	"Anita"
Course:	B.Arts (Journalism)
Sector:	University (Deakin, Victoria)
Location:	Queensland

Anita is completing her second year of the Bachelor of Arts degree (Journalism) at Deakin University in Victoria. She is enrolled as an off-campus student in her second year of full-time studies. The first year of her studies was completed on-campus and full-time at Deakin. She felt that she would prefer to be with her family who had returned to Brisbane from Victoria. Originally she had applied and was accepted at the University of Queensland. Having elected to defer for a year, this lapsed before she was able to do something about it. The alternative was to apply at Deakin. Currently she is negotiating to reapply/transfer to the University of Queensland for the final year of her degree and feels fairly sure that she will be accepted.

Anita is nineteen years of age and lives at home with her parents. They are of Australian origin and speak English at home. Anita completed her secondary studies at a Catholic school in an Australian provincial city, while both her parents have some secondary studies. She currently has a part-time job of tutoring high school students and working in a pizza place, her father is a large scale employer and her mother works in the clerical field. Anita's regular part-time work is necessary for her to cover all her expenses. The job is not in a field related to her chosen career.

Clearly Anita has chosen to make use of the different modes of study to meet her personal needs. The existence of off-campus studies has, in effect, meant that she could continue her studies without interruption.

While studying on-campus at Deakin, she was aware of other students who were studying off-campus and of some who were really studying mixed mode. By considering her own knowledge of what university study required Anita decided that it would be possible for her to continue her studies off-campus. Her first year of studies only required ten hours of contact per week. There did not seem to be too much difference in switching over to off-campus studies in this respect.

In addition, as she now lives in Brisbane, and has friends and a brother who are studying at the University of Queensland, she is able to use the library facilities there. She adopts the pattern of travelling each day to the university where she studies. She is able to participate in the on-campus social life, while using her Deakin materials and the library facilities.

Deakin provides a contact list of all students enrolled off-campus in similar subject areas. Visits by Deakin staff are arranged to the University of Queensland, as well as seminars designed to provide a forum for off-campus students to resolve any problems they maybe experiencing and to provide opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas. It is an excellent opportunity to meet other students who are studying the same subjects and to compare notes.

The instruction materials, Anita believes, are very good. One of her subjects, Political Science, was arranged in a series of study guides which is divided into weeks. In these guides, reading materials are listed, notes from the tutor, essays and extracts from relevant reference texts. Access to the required text books is also specified, so that students can arrange for this to occur. The study guides provide the student with a yearly timetable of topics to be covered. They also suggest at what pace the student needs to study. Anita's other subject is Journalism. So far she has received one mailing which includes a study guide similar to the one described above and some photocopied reference materials. She has written one letter to her tutor. Communication by telephone is possible by ringing the institution and reversing the charges or leaving a message for them to ring back.

The printed mode of instruction materials in this case is most suitable. Anita felt that the reference materials received were particularly helpful to the subjects she is studying. In fact, she expressed a preference for the printed mode. Her reaction to studying off-campus was that it was boring as it became difficult to motivate oneself to continue to study each day.

Despite feeling this way, she feels that she is able to select what is the most useful material, and identify important areas to study. She does not feel she has any problems in coping with this mode of study, and says that mature aged students returning/beginning to study after an absence of ten years or so may experience problems with materials.

Anita expresses a preference for on-campus studies. She believes there is more scope to learn. Attending lectures and tutorials breaks up the day. There is less self-discipline involved - as you have to go to lectures. In tutorials, even though there may be little or no interaction, there are still points to be gained from attending a tutorial. At the very least they provide the opportunity to ask questions.

She thinks that off-campus studies provide flexibility and the opportunity to work without clashing with contact hours. She studies during the day and works at nights and on the weekends. Her weekends are her time off. She believes off-campus study promotes self-motivation and tests one's dedication. She says "It's good for me!"

The positive features of off-campus study include good assessment of submitted work, with ample feedback - especially about the areas which can be improved. She does not see it as particularly different from on-campus study with the exception that there is no face-to-face interaction with tutors. She does not need to work in the library, but chose to do so as she can have some interaction with other students. This, in turn, helps her motivation. It also means that all the resources and books are readily available and that makes the studying easier.

Her comments about course materials include support for the weekly structure and guides for how much to study by a certain time. Regular correspondence from her tutors every two weeks is also a bonus, as it provides comments on the work she has completed.

As the courses which she is studying were written in 1978 (Political Science) and 1981 (Journalism) she feels it would be helpful to have some up-to-date comments from the tutor about the course materials, which provide a perspective on current issues as they relate to the courses.

Support and counselling are important, especially at the beginning of the year when it is necessary to sort out which subjects to study and to select appropriate major and minor areas of study. Planning a course of study for three years is an important issue to address at this stage. Sometimes subject choices - particularly in on-campus study - are based on timetable suitability.

Student 2.

Name:	"Geoff"
Course:	B. Business
Sector:	Advanced Education (Gippsland, Victoria)
Location:	Local, Victoria

Geoff is enrolled in the Bachelor of Business at the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education in Victoria. He is half way through his first unit of study. Geoff is twenty years of age, lives at home with his parents, not very far from the campus. He completed his secondary education at a Catholic school in an Australian rural town. He currently has a full-time clerical job. His course is in a career-related field. His mother is a small scale employer.

Originally Geoff began his studies as a part-time on-campus student. He found it difficult to study in this mode, which did not provide him with the information and assistance he required. There was not enough feedback from assignments. While there is not as much contact in his present course, a three-hour lecture held once a month provides ample opportunity to exchange ideas with tutors and other students.

Geoff felt that, overall, off-campus study was a convenient mode as it provided access to courses in both the country and metropolitan areas. He also knew of on-campus students who would attend the off-campus lectures in order to obtain extra knowledge. Off-campus students generally had work experience and there was an opportunity to exchange ideas with on-campus students who lacked this experience on these occasions.

Geoff works for the State Electricity Commission (SEC) and advice to study off-campus came from work colleagues and friends who had studied off-campus previously. The incentives were obtaining a qualification and being aware of the theories which enhanced his work experience.

The subject that Geoff is currently studying is Introduction to Administrative Studies. He feels that the printed study materials are excellent; they consist of a study guide and reading matter. He also attends a study group where two or three students arrange to meet regularly to discuss ideas and any problems arising from the course. Geoff prefers to study at home, and is able to go in to the campus in the evenings. The library facility is therefore readily available to him, as are the lecturers. A telephone answering service ensures that calls to lecturers are returned if they are unavailable when students ring.

Geoff felt that the quality of the instructional materials were very good. He did find them easier to manage than materials for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). They were not complex and easy to follow. His employer pays the $250 administration fee as well as the union fee.

Off-campus is the mode that Geoff prefers and he would choose to continue to study in this way. It enables him to accommodate his work and social commitments. Moreover, he believes he receives more assistance by studying in this way. The flexibility of pace of study, studying at home and the ability to choose the pace of study are also positive features of this mode of study. He also received support and encouragement from his employer to study.

Part-time on-campus studies were an unsuitable experience for Geoff as no consideration was given to the fact that he was fully employed and that he would need to study in a way which fitted in with his work requirements. Off-campus studies meet these needs in a way which suits Geoff's situation very well.

Student 3.

Name: "George"
Course: B.A. English and Comparative Literature
Sector: University (Murdoch, WA)
Location: Western Australia

George is enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Comparative Literature at Murdoch University, Western Australia. Originally he was enrolled at the University of Western Australia on an internal part-time basis in a Commerce degree. He had completed two years of this qualification. He is employed in the public sector and further study is encouraged by his employers. In fact, he is eligible to apply for time off to study. This year he hopes to begin his studies at Murdoch University in a part-time off-campus mode. He is also applying for status in the subjects he has already successfully completed at the University of Western Australia. Next year, he hopes to continue his studies on-campus and full-time.

In the transfer of institutions, George has found that Murdoch University has different prerequisites for the subjects he wishes to pursue; he is hoping to do the introductory units during the second semester this year in preparation for his full-time studies next year.

In making his choice to study in the off-campus mode, George was influenced by his mother, who had completed her degree entirely in the off-campus mode at Murdoch University. He was also aware of friends who were studying in mixed mode and they had found that it was a fulfilling way to study.

George believes that he has managed to arrange his studies successfully. However, he feels the process is a very confusing one. He had originally enrolled full-time by making a telephone enquiry. He was sent information about the courses available, but this did not include any information about off-campus studies. This process of enrolment did take some additional time.

George is hoping to commence his studies in the second semester and, so far, he has completed some preliminary reading. When he begins his study he will use printed notes with recommended text books. Assessment is assignment-based and he has the use of the off-campus library.

He feels that the off-campus materials are better than those used on-campus, because everything is there. Study can proceed at the student's own pace and the materials provided are very comprehensive. Students are also able to "roll over" their studies into the next semester. This enables them to study over the term holidays if it suits their needs, or to fit off-campus studies in between on-campus studies. Although he had studied for two years on-campus and full-time immediately after he had finished his secondary studies, George wanted the opportunity to experience off-campus studies and then decide which mode of study suited him best.

Studying on-campus on a part-time basis, George feels, can have the effect of just attending lectures and tutorials, without doing much work, whereas by studying off-campus you have to read the materials and obtain an understanding of the subject. He feels that this is much more of a learning process. It also enables a student to attend lectures (if it is possible) and simply listen and absorb what is being said rather than having to take notes.

Murdoch University also sends out a newsletter which makes students feel as if they are involved in campus life. Thus George can contact students who are doing the same subjects both for the social contact and to exchange ideas and problems.

George also feels that the $250 administration fee should be allocated on the basis of the degree that is being completed, as opposed to each year of study that is undertaken. This would not disadvantage off-campus and part-time students who generally take longer to complete their studies.

Student 4.

Name:	"Robyn"
Course:	Real Estate Certificate
Sector:	TAFE (Adelaide, South Australia)
Location:	South Australia

Robyn is currently enrolled in the Real Estate Certificate at Adelaide College of TAFE. She completed her secondary studies last year and had hoped to pursue a law degree at the University of Adelaide, but was not accepted. She is currently employed by a real estate firm. Her job involves clerical and public relations work in a small seaside town, approximately 85 kilometres from Adelaide. She had, while at school, completed some work experience with her present employers and was offered a position when she expressed an interest in completing the study required for the Real Estate Certificate. Her friends and employer supported this decision. She has also been able to seek all the help and guidance she requires from the real estate sales representatives in the firm.

Robyn is nineteen years of age and lives at home with her parents. She has completed her secondary studies at a State high school in an Australian rural town. Her parents have some secondary education and her father is currently a small scale employer while her mother undertakes home duties. Robyn is currently working full-time in a job which is career related and is studying part-time.

She chose to study in the off-campus mode as it enabled her to continue living in her home town and as well as providing her with some relevant qualifications while she was employed in an area which had definite career potential. Robyn felt that studying off-campus offered her the opportunity to spend time on topics without feeling as if she was brushing over them (as could be the tendency in class). She prefers to be able to study at her own pace and concentrate on spending more time on particular areas of weakness. She feels she can take notes more thoroughly than during lectures where she feels one tends to spend more time taking notes than listening and absorbing the information. Her employer also advised her to study in this mode from his own experience of studying mixed mode.

Robyn's course materials for Law I and Practice I arrived in three booklets, each containing three assignments. These have to be completed at the rate of one a fortnight. She has a recommended textbook from which she takes notes, reads designated sections and answers questions. The assignments generally take a month to be returned. Robyn feels that it would be helpful if they could be returned sooner as feedback is required in order to complete other assignments. Her tutor is too difficult to contact and she is fortunate that she gets help from the real estate sales representatives in the office where she works.

The study materials are written in a style which is easy to understand although she feels that they are fairly brief. This underlies the need to have access to a range of reference materials. She was able to enrol by using the telephone and having materials sent out to her. As well, she received most of her reference books from the Real Estate Institute by mail.

She is not able to take time off work in order to study on-campus. The off-campus mode enables her to study and work. Had she been an on-campus student she would have required a student allowance as well as part-time work in order to support herself.

One of the positive features of her off-campus studies in real estate is that she has the opportunity to discuss what she is learning in the practical context of her work environment.

Robyn feels that it is good to work on her own after the full-time attendance of school. Had she not had the opportunity to study off-campus in this particular situation, Robyn feels that she would have lost the chance of developing a career ("I'd just have to stay a secretary"). She feels that there is little educational opportunity for school leavers who live in the country.

Student 5.

Name: "Warren"
Course: Comp. Science
Sector: University (Murdoch, Western Australia)
Location: Queensland

Warren is completing the Bachelor of Computing Science degree from Murdoch University. Warren is twenty years of age and married. He had completed his secondary studies at a Catholic school in the Blue Mountains, NSW. His father has a trade certificate, while his mother has a Diploma award. Both work in areas which entails a supervisory role.

He is interested in science, especially computing and chemistry, and had already completed one year of full-time on-campus studies at the University of New England in New South Wales. He enjoyed studying in this way. However, as he was married, he needed to find a way of supporting himself more substantially. Since he was too far away to study off-campus courses in his field, which required some on-campus attendance, he found a course which did not have any attendance requirements.

Presently he is studying two subjects, Electronics and Computing Science. With the first subject, there is a set of cassette tapes which provide an introduction to each new section of work as well as a textbook and exercise book, which students work through chronologically. Warren feels that this is a very easy way to learn; it is a very well produced book and he is able to progress at his own pace. A kit is also provided, so that the necessary experimentation can be completed as set out in the manual. For Computing Science two textbooks are recommended purchases and these are supplemented with some notes. Directions to read the required sections of the textbook are given. This subject requires the student to have access to a personal computer in order to complete the exercises. Warren feels that there is not a lot of course material which has to be learned.

Electronics is a subject in which he had no previous knowledge. At first he found it to be too easy, but after about three weeks he felt that the course materials and structure picked up to a reasonable level and pace of study. Computing Science, on the other hand, seemed too hard at first even though he had some previous knowledge of the area. He feels, though, that he has done well now that he has completed some of the course.

Warren's major reasons for studying in this way were simply that he lives too far away from a tertiary institution to attend. He needs to work full-time in order to support himself.

He tries to study each night or, alternatively, he spends about 6 hours over the weekend completing the required amount of work. The course materials from Murdoch are to be completed within a specified period of time, which requires the student to organise his time and study regularly. Although he says he would choose to study off-campus in the future, due to his own commitments, he feels it does not have any advantages over full-time on-campus study. His only real advantage is that he is able to gain experience in the market place and study at the same time. He may be able to find a position with Australia Post (as he is currently employed with them as a postal clerk).

Warren found that the orientation and enrolment processes were confusing. Payment was required in order to receive any materials and the amount of time taken for the items to be processed in the mail brought the whole process quite close to the cut-off time for enrolment. This process produced a great deal of anxiety, especially when some acknowlegement of enrolment was required. He finally received acknowledgement but there was no notice regarding the subjects in which he had enrolled until the semester was due to begin. The course materials did not arrive until one month after the course was due to commence. This is also distressing, especially as the course is tied to a particular time schedule. Warren also needed to sort out how to obtain advanced standing for the year of studies he had completed at the University of New England. The information about this process was set out in the calendar. He felt, however, that this could have been explained more simply.

Warren would prefer personal contact with lecturing staff for help with problem areas in his studies. At present his only support is the local Toowoomba Institute which he finds most helful. He has been able to borrow a P.C. from the Institute.

Although he feels that the course materials provided are narrowly focused, he is happy with them. He does not feel the course needs any more materials.

Student 6.

Name: "Paul"
Course: Business Certificate in Accounting
Sector: TAFE
Location: South Australia

Paul is enrolled in the Business Certificate in Accounting with the Adelaide College of TAFE in a mixed mode of study. Paul is nineteen years of age and living at home with his parents in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, South Australia. He completed his secondary schooling at a State high school and currently has a full-time clerical job. His parents
have some secondary schooling and his father works in a clerical area, while his mother is a semi-skilled worker. He is able to go into the campus one night per week while on the weekends he is able to devote his time to his off-campus studies and his homework for his on-campus studies. He is working full-time at the moment, and after consideration of his commitments, he decided that he would have enough time to study in this way.

From the off-campus studies handbook, Paul was able to find out about the course he wanted to do. He sought advice from lecturers who would be involved in off-campus studies; they were able to advise him on how to select subjects.

The subject materials are in the form of printed assignments. Paul feels that he is handling the work well and is happy with the feedback that he has received so far. He feels he is probably learning more because he has assignments to complete. The information presented is straightforward, not complicated, and is easy to understand.

When he attends his on-campus class the learning process is quite different. There are no printed materials as in off-campus studies, so the learning is by word of mouth and by the questions asked. He feels that by studying mixed mode he has variety in his learning.

Paul decided on his studies in TAFE after some discussion with a counsellor from his secondary school.

Currently, he works for a transport firm and is using his studies as a springboard for transfer or promotion to an area where his work would be related to his studies. His employer has also advised him on the sorts of subjects which would help most at work. He feels his employer supports his studies and he is able to discuss with them how he is going.

He feels happy with mixed mode studies and feels he would be able to continue with either form of study.

3.13.3 Summary

The six student interviews go to make up a series of case studies which further enrich the information already presented. The group interviewed were mixed. They were enrolled at university (3), a CAE (1) and in TAFE (2). Some were studying wholly off-campus, others by mixed mode. At least two used the resources of another institution (students 1 and 5). Although the number interviewed was limited, the issues which have already emerged were confirmed.

Most of these students clearly believed that off-campus or mixed mode was a useful, indeed necessary, means of study. Most clearly found the level of support they received adequate, although one TAFE student (Student 4) mentioned having trouble contacting her lecturer. Another found enrolment procedures confusing. Nevertheless, the students clearly received the support they needed from friends, employers and the institutions at which they were enrolled. Most of the case studies believed their mode of study was the best compromise for them, although several would have preferred other options. Feedback on their work was generally adequate and contact was maintained by:

- being able to visit the campus;
- telephone;
- letter;
- visits by staff;
- contact with fellow students; and
- newsletters.

employers clearly supported enrolment in a number of cases - allowing time off work for study or paying fees, providing help with assignment work etc. Friends and family were clearly important to a number of them. In at least three cases, the students may have had less real support had they had to move to study on-campus. Most saw off-campus or mixed mode study as a way of combining work and study - and of creating a lifestyle which most suited their particular circumstances at that time.

In sum, the message that we get from these interviews is a positive one which adds weight to our belief that off-campus studies are a suitable and necessary option for many 16 to 19 year olds.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study arose from the study by Anwyl et al. (1986) and set out to examine the distance education needs of a specific sub-group of the off-campus population - 16 to 19 year olds. The study was to determine:-

- the reasons for choosing to study in the external mode;
- the nature and extent of required provision of external education;
- special curriculum, delivery, counselling and support needs; and
- specific future policy recommendations.

The study employed questionnaires administered to staff and students. Thirty six staff responses were received, mainly from Heads of External Studies; 180 students responded to the questionnaire. Of these 38 were enrolled at university, 33 at CAEs and 109 in TAFE. Two institutions or authorities were sampled in each sector of tertiary education. The responses in the CAE and university sectors came predominantly from one institution in each case.

The aims and their appropriate conclusions will be examined in turn. Before this, however, some context setting is appropriate.

4.1 THE CONTEXT

The present study has broad reaching aims. It has been completed in approximately four months. Of necessity, then, some of the elements of the study have required a more circumspect treatment than, perhaps, was desirable. Moreover, responses from institutions were slow in coming in. This is not surprising - many demands are made on people's time. Returns of student questionnaires were disappointing, not only in terms of the numbers received, but also because there is an apparent bias caused by having responses coming from predominantly one institution in both the CAE and university samples.

Notwithstanding all of this, the major messages emerging have the ring of truth - they are supported, in many cases, by the responses of the various groups sampled and across the sectors.

While the study may appear to raise more questions than it answers, the project team hopes that the report sheds some further light on the needs of 16 to 19 year olds studying wholly or partially by the off-campus mode.

4.2 THE REASONS FOR STUDY

There are many reasons for studying externally. Many were explored in the present study in section 3.10. The principal reasons cited by 16 to 19 year olds were:

- distance;
- preference for the flexibility that the mode provides;
- work commitments;
- financial reasons; and
- timetable clashes.

The first four reasons are those which might be offered by any off-campus student, regardless of age. Some of the student comments suggested that off-campus was a positive choice; it represented a means of combining the elements of their lifestyle in a way which most suited their needs.

Much emphasis was placed by Heads of External Studies Departments on the need for students to have support. Support, in terms of the media and resources provided, will be discussed shortly. The study shows, however, that many students were receiving support not only from the institution at which they studied, but also those around them. For these students off-campus is a positive experience which enables them to combine various elements of their life - for example, work and study.

It is tempting to speculate that post-secondary education is undergoing a change. With the economic downturn, and jobs apparently scarce, an increasing number of students may now be deciding to obtain work and use their job as a raison d'etre for study. Traditionally tertiary students, particularly those at universities and CAEs, have studied and then sought work. The balance may be shifting towards work then study or work and study. The tertiary sector may need to adapt to such changes in demand. Even if the emphasis is not shifting, it is clear that many 16 to 19 year olds are studying off-campus for similar reasons to older students - they have jobs, they may have commitments to their employer, they undoubtedly receive personal support from their family, friends and colleagues. Some may not be willing to give up this security for the more doubtful security of full-time study, less resources, living away from home and living in an unfamiliar environment. In fact, they may feel more isolated within the on-campus environment. It is this environment which, it is supposed, provides the personal and intellectual support students need. For many it does - for others it may be a less satisfactory alternative than part-time off-campus study within a familiar environment and with (relatively) secure finances.

Mixed mode study is used to overcome timetable clashes, or to enable students to undertake full-or part-time work whilst still having some degree of contact with the campus environment. Thus mixed mode study is a mechanism which enables students to make choices and gives students a level of flexibility which they may find missing in purely on-campus studies. It potentially gives them greater control. It may help to solve their problems. A study by Woodley (1981) suggested, in essence, that student failure was in direct proportion to the number or degree of problems they encountered; the greater the number of problems the less likely they were to succeed. To exclude or minimise the options available may be to promote or enhance the chances of failure. If many 16 to 19 year olds are, as they appear to be, studying off-campus part-time, or by mixed mode by choice, then the removal of that choice will reduce options. It may increase the number of problems. Problems may be overcome by the more creative use of the tertiary sector's teaching resources. This point will be considered in the following section.

4.3 THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF REQUIRED PROVISION

An aim of the study was to examine the nature and extent of required provision for 16 to 19 year olds. However, the project team has been able to attempt little more than to gain an insight into the levels of current provision. Section 3.5 of the report deals with the extent of this provision. It is clear that:

- TAFE is, by far, the major provider of post-compulsory off-campus studies;

- TAFE is the major provider of off-campus and mixed mode studies for 16 to 19 year olds. Both CAEs and universities are, by comparison, very modest providers for the age group. Sixteen to 19 year olds are excluded from their programs because much of their distance education provision is for those undertaking a post-initial qualification. Other courses have entry requirements, such as a certain period of work in a relevant field, which effectively exclude these students as well. Several institutions indicated that it was not their policy to enrol students who were under 20 years of age or so. If this policy is based on age only, rather than the nature of the course and the entry requirements for it, then this practice should not be sanctioned since there appears to be little concrete evidence that 16 to 19 year olds perform less well than older students;

- there is already an apparent shortfall in the provision of on-campus places for students at CAEs and universities (Anderson and McDonald 1986). Given that many students in the 16 to 19 year old group are seeking but not getting places in tertiary institutions and that off-campus and mixed modes are seen as useful (if not desirable) means of study by many 16 to 19 year olds, it is worth considering a redistribution of places in tertiary institutions and systems to de-emphasise on-campus studies somewhat and make greater provision for the off-campus and mixed modes of study for the age group;

- because of the difficulty the project team had in determining the actual provision for 16 to 19 year olds, the extent of provision required may need some sort of "market survey". Such a study was beyond the scope of the present study. One simple way of determining required provision would be to ask individual providers about the number of enquiries they have for their particular programs or off-campus studies in general. While this taps those students who have thought of, or been advised, to consider the mode, it does not tap those students who may wish to study but do not consider off-campus study in some form although the mode may meet their needs. Moreover, 'required provisions' not only suggest the overall number of students, but their distribution amongst courses of study. If study in a particular course is not actually available in off-campus mode it is difficult to determine the demand purely by asking individual institutions. Determining the demand may require a priori judgement about likely areas of demand; alternatively, it may reflect the current availability of courses - which may actually be inappropriate when compared to student demands or needs.

4.4 SPECIAL CURRICULUM, DELIVERY, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

There has been some doubt amongst the Heads of External Studies Departments and other staff about the suitability of either off-campus or mixed mode studies for 16 to 19 year olds. This concern is described in section 3.9. Provisions for those studying off-campus are considered from the institutional perspective in section 3.11 and the student perspective in section 3.12. The current policy on provision by a number of the groups giving advice to CTEC was presented in the Introduction (section 1).

The Heads of External Studies Departments, on balance, do not believe that 16 to 19 year olds are suitable users of off-campus studies. The group looks with more favour on mixed mode studies however. Nevertheless their views are equivocal; some point out that their views are based on little more than impressions or "gut feeling". Those in TAFE have the greatest experience with the age group, although their views broadly accord with those of their advanced sector colleagues. Nevertheless a number of staff point out that, in the end, the success or otherwise of students depends on their personal circumstances and motivation. There is no reason to suppose that the motivation and other desirable attributes for off-campus study are acquired at 21 along with the key to the door. Intellectual maturity depends on experience, motivation, circumstance and drive. It is clear that many 16 to 19 year olds are studying using the off-campus mode and will be successful - others will not be. Yet there is no clear or hard evidence of the success of 16 to 19 year olds with respect to other comparable groups.

Some hard evidence needs to be gathered to support or negate the general impression amongst staff about the relative unsuitability of 16 to 19 year olds for distance studies. Many students have studied "off-campus" from their primary years.

Others study mixed mode in their senior secondary schooling. Until we know how successful the group is, and what factors contribute to their success, there will be little more than generalised impressionistic data which is an unsuitable basis on which to make policy decisions of real significance.

The study revealed a wide range of support mechanisms and delivery media. Some, such as the telephone and print media delivered by mail, are relatively common. Others are less commonly used. There was a general belief amongst Heads of External Studies Departments and other staff that 16 to 19 year olds required greater support than older students when studying off-campus. Whilst it might be useful to examine the extent to which the 16 to 19 year olds require support when compared with older students, the project team believes that it may be profitable to examine the extent to which existing media and communication methods are used to support students. It was clear that a relatively wide range of media was used. However the response sizes of the present study did not permit the team to isolate which courses were using particular media. The general impression gained is that the media needed are in place and are being used successfully. From the student data, it appears there may be a need to broaden the variety of delivery media and communication or support mechanisms available for use. In TAFE particularly, print and the telephone predominate. In the other sectors, particular media and communication mechanisms are emphasised which may reflect institution or course preferences for media. It may also reflect the extent to which staff have been able, or willing, to establish alternative approaches to delivering their message and fostering communication. One of the student interviews where the student lived in Queensland, studied at the University of Queensland, but was enrolled at Deakin, suggests that there is much to be gained from improving reciprocal arrangements between institutions and sectors so that 16 to 19 year old students can receive some measure of personal support. It will also enable them to have access to local resources, such as a library.

In sum the project team believes there is a place for 16 to 19 year olds in off-campus or mixed mode studies. Indeed their presence as a group, perhaps, should be greater than it currently is. Nevertheless, there is a need to explore ways in which their greater participation can be encouraged and suitable support provided. There is little concrete evidence to support the impression amongst a number of distance educators that their performance in the mode is relatively poor. Indeed off-campus seems to be the chosen option of a significant number of those responding to our survey.

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7. APPENDICES

1. Student questionnaire
2. Questionnaire to Heads of External Studies Departments
3. Questionnaire to student counsellors/advisors
4. Covering letter for student questionnaire Departments
5. Covering letter for Heads of External Studies Departments
6. Mailing list for Heads of External Studies Departments
7. Follow-up to Heads of External Studies Departments
8. Student interview schedule.

APPENDIX 1

TAFE
TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD
296 Payneham Road Payneham South Australia 5070 Australia Phone (08) 42 7405

CONFIDENTIAL

DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR 16-20 YEAR OLDS

A survey of distance education students aged between 16-20 years and their reasons for choosing to study off-campus.

Most of the questions can be answered by circling the appropriate number. Unless otherwise indicated, please circle one number only when answering each question.

A COURSE INFORMATION

In this section we would like you to tell us something about your course.

1. Course title ....

2. Name of institution providing your current course of study

....

3. Year you began your present course: 1 9 ☐ ☐

4. Expected year of completion of your present course: 1 9 ☐ ☐

5. How many components/units required to complete the course? ☐

6. How many components/units have you already successfully completed? ☐

7. In your course of study, please complete the following table by ticking in each of the three columns the type of enrolment which is:

(a) available at the institution where you are enrolled

(b) your most preferred mode of study

(c) Your actual mode of study

Mode of Enrolment	Available at Institution in your course/unit	Your preferred mode of enrolment (tick one)	Your actual mode of enrolment (tick one)
On-campus full-time			
part-time			
Off-campus full-time			
part-time			
Mixed mode full-time			
part-time			

Note: On-campus is an enrolment at an institution where attendance is required for all lectures and tutorial/practicals.

Off-campus is an enrolment at an institution where some/no attendance is required and the major portion of studies are completed by correspondence.

Mixed mode is any combination of off-campus and on-campus enrolment

8. Were you advised to choose the off-campus mode of studying by (circle YES or NO for each):

parents .... YES / NO

potential employer .... YES / NO

employer .... YES / NO

friends .... YES / NO

counsellor .... YES / NO

career advisor .... YES / NO

other (please specify) .... YES / NO

9. Please indicate below what forms of instruction are used in the course/unit which you are studying off-campus by circling either YES or NO for each:

Printed study materials .... YES / NO

Telephone .... YES / NO

Tele-conferencing .... YES / NO

Face-to-face visits by tutor .... YES / NO

Computer managed/assisted instruction .... YES / NO

Audio tapes .... YES / NO

Video tapes .... YES / NO

Regional Study groups .... YES / NO

Summer schools/time spent on-campus ...... YES / NO

Other (please specify) .... YES / NO

10.a) Do you have any opportunities to make contact with your (circle either YES, NO, NOT APPLICABLE for each):

lecturer/teacher .... YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

counsellor .... YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

course adviser .... YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

fellow students .... YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE

b) Do you take the opportunity to make contact with your (circle either YES or NO for each):

lecturer/teacher .... YES / NO

counsellor .... YES / NO

course adviser .... YES / NO

fellow students .... YES / NO

11. If you had the option to do further courses/units which mode of enrolment would you choose? (circle one)

on-campus 1

off-campus 2

mixed mode 3

Why would you choose this mode?

....

....

....

....

....

....

B REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO STUDY OFF-CAMPUS/MIXED MODE

The following are some reasons that people might have for studying off-campus or in mixed mode. Please indicate for each reason its importance in your own situation or if is not applicable, by placing a tick (✓) in one box for each person:

		Significantly important	Of some importance	Little or no importance	Don't know/not applicable
12. a)	I lived too far away from campus				
b)	My work commitments prevented me from attending a campus				
c)	I didn't like the idea of studying on campus				
d)	It was easier for me to get into the external course				
e)	The course was only available externally				
f)	I preferred the flexibility of studying at home				
g)	I preferred the flexible pace of study				
h)	I could choose the pace at which I would study				

		Significantly important	Of some importance	Little or no importance	Don't know/not applicable
i)	Time table clashes made it impossible for me to attend classes				
j)	I have transport difficulties				
k)	I have a disability which made it difficult to study by other means				
l)	I work full time				
m)	I work part-time				
n)	I work shifts				
o)	My employer encouraged me to study off-campus				
p)	Employment requirement for me to study off-campus				
q)	I am isolated by personal/social circumstances (e.g. family commitment)				
r)	I am a resident of an institution (e.g. prison, hospital etc)				
s)	I am unable to attend an additional campus where institution has a number of campuses				
t)	My family is not in favour of me studying full-time on-campus				
u)	Course/course unit only available on another campus of a multi-campus institution				
v)	I can obtain access to better materials/ resources				
w)	There are too many contact hours on-campus				
x)	I am studying off-campus because I have to support myself financially				
y)	Other reason (please specify)				

C PERSONAL DETAILS

In this section we are asking you something about yourself and your background. We do not want to pry into your background as an individual, but rather, we want to find out about the needs of off-campus students with different backgrounds.

12. Your age is ....years

13. Your sex is Female .....1 Male 2

14. Your Marital Status is (circle one number):

never married 1
married/living with partner 2
separated 3
divorced 4

15. Postcode of your current place of residence ☐☐☐☐

16. You are living with (circle one number):

partner and family 1
partner 2
parents 3
alone 4
friend/s 5
other (please specify) 6

17. Country of birth of: (please tick appropriate boxes)

Yourself:	Australia	☐	Other Country	☐
Father :	Australia	☐	Other Country	☐
Mother :	Austrlia	☐	Other Country	☐

18. What is the main language you speak at home (tick one box)

English	☐	
Other Language	☐	Please specify ....

19. What was the highest secondary educational level you had successfully completed when you started your present course

Yr 9	1
Yr 10	2
Yr 11	3
Yr 12	4

20. If you had already begun tertiary studies in any of the following areas prior to enroling in your present course please indicate below. If not, then proceed to question 21.

TAFE	1
CAE	2
University	3

21. What was the highest educational level obtained by your parents. Circle one number for your father and one for mother.

	Father	Mother
Primary School	1	1
Some secondary school	2	2
Completed secondary school to Yr 12	3	3
Trade/Certificate course	4	4
Diploma or equivalent	5	5
Bachelor degree	6	6
Higher degree	7	7
Don't know	8	9

22. Type of school attended during most of your secondary education.

State high school	1
State technical school	2
Area School	3
Catholic school	4
Independent non-Catholic school	5
Other (please specify)	6

23. Location of school attended for most of your secondary education.

Overseas 1

Australian Capital city 2

Australian Provincial city 3

Australian Rural town 4

Other (please specify) 5

1=Professional
2=Large scale employer/manager
3=Small scale employer/manager
4=Intermediate non-manual worker
5=Clerical and related worker
6=Foreman and skilled worker
7=Semi-skilled manual worker
8=Farmer/farm owner
9=Don't know/not applicable

24. Using the classification provided below, please indicate the present occupation of (if not working now, indicate classification of last job):

a) yourself ☐
b) your spouse/partner ☐
c) your father ☐
d) your mother ☐

Professional (Generally requires a university degree or diploma or equivalent; e.g. lawyer, doctor, accountant, journalist, nurse, teacher etc.) 1

Large scale employer/manager (Employs, plans, or manages about 25 or more persons; e.g. a senior public servant who is not a professional, owner of a large business, local government inspector, financial manager, etc.) 2

Small scale employer/manager (Employs, plans or manages an operation with fewer than 25 persons, or self-employed with a middle or higher income; e.g. a shop proprietor, self-employed insurance or real estate agent, manager of a small business, etc.) .. 3

Intermediate non-manual worker (Employees having some supervisory role or skill; e.g. bookkeeper, middle level public servant, post master, non-commissioned officer, real estate or insurance employee.) 4

Clerical and related worker e.g. clerk, postal officer, shop assistant, commercial traveller policeman etc. 5

Foreman and skilled worker (Employees with specified skills; e.g. fitter and turner, plumber, other qualified technician or tradesman etc.) 6

Semi-skilled manual worker (Employees with no or only a small amount of skill or training; e.g. driver, caretaker, medical attendant, labourer, etc.) 7

Farmer/farm owner 8

Don't know/not applicable 9

25. Are you (circle one number):

Working full-time and studying full-time 1

Working full-time and studying part-time 2

Working part-time and studying full-time 3

Not working and studying full-time 4

Not working and studying part-time 5

26. Are you currently employed? (circle one number)

Yes, full-time employment 1

Yes, regular/permanent part-time employment 2

Yes, intermittent/casual part-time employment 3

*No, unemployed/seeking employment 4

*No, unemployed/not seeking employment 5

* go to Question 28.

27. Do any of the following describe how you feel about the job you have now? Tick one box for each statement.

	True for me	Not true
a) Only a temporary job until I can obtain the work I really want		
b) My job is mainly to earn money for non-educational expenses while I am studying		
c) My job is mainly to help with educational expenses		
d) My job is necessary to cover all my expenses		
e) My job is relevant to my career		
f) My job has definite career potential		

28. We realise that answering a questionnaire may not provide the full story, so if you would like to give us more details please use the space below. Added information may include the benefits of studying off-campus, problems you encountered while studying and any special needs which may not be provided by your institution/course that would help you in your studies.

Positive features of your choice of studying:

....

....

....

....

....

Difficulties encountered by students in studying off-campus/ mixed mode:

....

....

....

....

....

Needs not met by the institution:

....

....

....

....

....

Other:

....

....

....

....

....

We would like to arrange an interview with some of those who answer the questionnaire. If you are willing to be interviewed please provide details below of your name, address and a telephone number where you can be contacted.

Name .... Phone:Day ....

Evening.............

Address...

....

....

Thank you for answering the questionnaire. Please return it in the envelope provided to:

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development
296 Payneham Road
PAYNEHAM SA 5070

1. Extent of Participation of 16-19 year olds

In your institution, how many students are enrolled in off-campus and mixed mode study? (The term off-campus includes external studies and is used interchangeably throughout the study. In this set of questions we have adhered to one term for ease of use.) In which courses do these enrolments occur? Please use the tables provided below.

1.1

	Off-Campus			Mixed Mode		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
All Enrolments						
16-19 year olds						

Enrolments by Course of Study

Course of study (Please include the title and kind of course)	Number of 16-19 year olds		Total number enrolled (all ages)	
	off-campus	mixed mode	off-campus	mixed mode

1.2 Are there any quotas and/restrictions set by your institution for entry to off-campus and mixed mode studies?

YES ☐

NO ☐ go to Q.1.4

If yes, in which courses? Why are these quotas set? (Please use the table below)

Course of study	Reason for restriction
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....

1.3 Are these restrictions outlined above different from those applying to on-campus (internal) studies?

YES ☐

NO ☐

If yes, in what way?

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1.4 What is the policy of your institution about entry requirements and special entry requirements for off-campus studies for 16-19 year olds. Please use the table below to provide your answer.

Course of study	Entry requirements for off-campus studies (eg matriculation; higher school certificate	Special entry requirements specifically for 16-19 year olds off-campus studies (eg entrance examination)
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....
....	....	....

1.5 In addition to the annual fees, books, writing materials etc. please list what students must supply themselves to undertake courses offered off-campus at your institution. (For example: any additional fees; equipment such as cameras, computers etc.; other expenses.)

Course of study	Student supplied course requirements
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....

1.6 What are the methods used to inform students what it is a student undertaking a course must supply. Please indicate by ticking the columns below.

Method of informing students	YES	NO
Institution/course handbook		
Enrolment interview		
Course circular		
Telephone		
Other (please specify)		

1.7 What are your impressions of the success of off-campus and mixed mode students aged between 16-19? (You may wish to compare their success with that of older students or students enrolled on-campus; in addition their success in the different courses of study your institution may offer could be compared.)

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1.8 In general, are off-campus and mixed mode students and lecturers at your institution encouraged to make personal contact with one another to seek/provide support, information and advice when needed?

YES ☐

NO ☐ Go to Q.1.9

If yes, please describe briefly the way it works.

....

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1.9 Do the off-campus lecturers/tutors generally know the age of their students when they are:

	YES	NO
marking their work?		
consulting with them?		

2. Existing special provisions

Special provisions relate to what is provided specifically for off-campus or mixed mode students.

2.1 What range of special provisions exist across courses at your institution for off-campus studies, in the following areas:

a) learning support materials? ....

....

b) delivery media? ....

....

c) counselling-personal support? ....

....

d) support-academic? ....

....

e) other provisions? - please specify ....

....

2.2 Do you make different provision in any of these areas for 16-19 year old students who study in off-campus or mixed modes?

YES ☐

NO ☐

In what way (s) are these provisions different for 16-19 y.o. who study in off-campus or mixed modes?

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2.3 Does the off-campus studies department make any attempt to encourage participation of specific sub-groups of students (for example, disadvantaged groups)?

YES ☐

NO ☐ go to Q.2.4

If yes, which groups have been encouraged and how have they been encouraged?

Groups encouraged	How encouraged
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....

2.4 What methods are used to promote off-campus courses for potential students at your institution? Please use the table below to briefly state the method of promotion and rate its effectiveness.

Method of promotion	Most Successful	Successful	Least Successful
Promotional brochures			
Promotional videos			
Advertisement in special journals/publications			
Promotional posters			
TV advertising			
Video tax			
Visits to Schools			
Newspaper advertisements			
Institutional handbook			
Handbook prepared specifically for career counsellors at schools/other educational institutions			
Others (please specify)			

2.5 What methods are used by your institution to inform potential off-campus students about enrolment procedures and support services? How effective do you feel these methods are at your institution?

Method used to inform students	Most Successful	Successful	Least Successful
a) enrolment procedures			
b) support services			

3. Reasons for off-campus studies

3.1 From your own experiences, what are the reasons 16-19 year old students give for choosing to study off-campus/mixed mode?

Reasons for off-campus study	Reasons for mixed mode study
....	....
1	....
2	....
3	....
4	....
5	....

3.2 In what ways, if any, are 16-19 year old students' reasons for choosing to study in the off-campus/mixed mode different from older off-campus students?

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4. Nature and extent of required off-campus provisions

In this section we would like your views on the nature and extent of off-campus provision for students aged between 16-19 years. From your experience and knowledge of this age group we would like to ascertain from you what evidence exists on the suitability or otherwise of off-campus studies for 16-19 year old students.

4.1 Do you believe that off-campus studies are generally suitable for 16-19 year old students? Please state the evidence on which you base your comments.

YES ☐

NO ☐

Comments: ....

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4.2 Do you believe that a mixed mode of studying is generally suitable for 16-19 year old students?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Comments: ....

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4.3 What special measures might be used to promote off-campus studies for 16-19 year old students?

Comments: ....

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5. Specific needs of 16-19 year old students

In section 2 we asked you to provide information about existing special provisions for off-campus studies, and if any of these provisions were different for 16-19 year olds. In this section we would like to ask you to give us your thoughts on what specific needs 16-19 year old off-campus/ mixed mode students may require in terms of:

a) learning support materials ....

....

b) delivery media ....

....

c) counselling-personal support ....

....

d) support-academic ....

....

e) other provisions - please specify ....

....

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire. Please return it using the reply paid envelope provided to:

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development
296 Payneham Road
PAYNEHAM SA 5070

APPENDIX 3

1. Reasons for off-campus studies

1.1 From your own experiences, what are the reasons 16-19 year old students give for choosing to study off-campus/mixed mode?

Reasons for off-campus study	Reasons for mixed mode study
....	....
1	....
2	....
3	....
4	....
5	....

1.2 In what ways, if any, are 16-19 year old students' reasons for choosing to study in the off-campus/mixed mode different from older off-campus students?

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....

1.3 What are your impressions of the success of off-campus and mixed mode students aged between 16-19? (You may wish to compare their success with that of older students or students enrolled on-campus; in addition their success in the different courses of study your institution may offer could be compared.)

....

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2. Existing special provisions

Special provisions relate to what is provided specifically for off-campus or mixed mode students.

2.1 What range of special provisions exist across courses at your institution for off-campus studies, in the following areas:

a) learning support materials?................................

....

b) delivery media? ....

....

c) counselling-personal support? ....

....

d) support-academic? ....

....

e) other provisions? - please specify ....

....

2.2 Do you make different provision in any of these areas for 16-19 year old students who study in off-campus or mixed modes?

YES ☐

NO ☐

In what way (s) are these provisions different for 16-19 y.o. who study in off-campus or mixed modes?

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2.3 Does the off-campus studies department make any attempt to encourage participation of specific sub-groups of students (for example, disadvantaged groups)?

YES ☐

NO ☐ go to Q.2.4

If yes, which groups have been encouraged and how have they been encouraged?

Groups encouraged	How encouraged
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....
....	....

2.4 What methods are used to promote off-campus courses for potential students at your institution? Please use the table below to briefly state the method of promotion and rate its effectiveness.

Method of promotion	Most Successful	Successful	Least Successful
Promotional brochures			
Promotional videos			
Advertisement in special journals/publications			
Promotional posters			
TV advertising			
Video tax			
Visits to Schools			

(question 2.4 cont../4)

Method of promotion	Most Successful	Successful	Least Successful
Newspaper advertisements			
Institutional handbook			
Handbook prepared specifically for career counsellors at schools/other educational institutions			
Others (please specify)			

3. Nature and extent of required off-campus provisions

In this section we would like your views on the nature and extent of off-campus provision for students aged between 16-19 years. From your experience and knowledge of this age group we would like to ascertain from you what evidence exists on the suitability or otherwise of off-campus studies for 16-19 year old students.

3.1 Do you believe that off-campus studies are generally suitable for 16-19 year old students? Please state the evidence on which you base your comments.

YES ☐

NO ☐

Comments: ....

....

....

....

....

3.2 Do you believe that a mixed mode of studying is generally suitable for 16-19 year old students?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Comments: ....

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3.3 What special measures might be used to promote off-campus studies for 16-19 year old students?

Comments: ....

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4. Specific needs of 16-19 year old students

In section 2 we asked you to provide information about existing special provisions for off-campus studies, and if any of these provisions were different for 16-19 year olds. In this section we would like to ask you to give us your thoughts on what specific needs 16-19 year old off-campus/mixed mode students may require in terms of:

a) learning support materials..............................

....

b) delivery media ....

....

c) counselling-personal support ....

....

d) support-academic ....

....

e) other provisions - please specify ....

....

Thank you for responding to this questionnaire. Please return it using the reply paid envelope provided to:

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development
296 Payneham Road
PAYNEHAM SA 5070

APPENDIX 4

TAFE

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD.
296 Payneham Road, Payneham, South Australia 5070, Australia. Phone (08) 42 7905
(Incorporated in South Australia)

OP24/ZK/lp:11-lett

6th April 1987

Dear

A SURVEY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS AGED BETWEEN 16-19 YEARS AND THEIR REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO STUDY OFF-CAMPUS

As you are an off-campus student aged between 16-19 years, we would appreciate it very much if you would spare the time to answer and return the attached questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope provided.

The questionnaire is being distributed to a sample group of students in TAFE Colleges, Colleges of Advanced Education and Universities in South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria.

This study has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission's Standing Committee on External Studies. In this questionnaire we would like to find out from you why you are studying in off-campus or mixed mode. We hope that the information we collect and our report will help to lead to recommendations which will improve the provision of off-campus courses for 16 to 19 year olds.

The whole questionnaire should take about half an hour or less to complete. The questions ask about the course you are presently studying, the reasons for choosing to study in this way and yourself. There is a section at the end for you to tell us about your off-campus studies and how you feel about it.

At a later stage we would like to obtain more information about studying off-campus from a sample of those who responded to this questionnaire. For this purpose we have provided an opportunity for you, if you wish, to include your name and contact address/telephone number at the end of the questionnaire so that you can be part of this process.

../

We can assure you the information you provide will remain confidential. By completing and returning the questionnaire you will be making a positive contribution to the future provision of off-campus studies. We thank you in anticipation and hope you find the task interesting.

Yours sincerely,

Zofia Krzemionka.

Zofia Krzemionka
Research and Development Officer

enc.

APPENDIX 5

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD.
296 Payneham Road, Payneham, South Australia 5070, Australia. Phone (08) 42 7905
(Incorporated in South Australia)

OP24/ZK/lp:10-lett

8th April 1987

N

Dear

Distance Education for 16-19 year olds

The TAFE National Centre for Research and Development recently received funding from the CTEC Standing Committee on External Studies to conduct a research project which would set out to identify the participation of students aged between 16-19 years in external studies in the tertiary education sector. I have enclosed, for your information, a copy of the original and modified project brief, and a list of advisory committee members. (Attachments A, B and C)

The project has the following objectives:

1. to determine the present extent of participation of 16-19 year olds in the tertiary external studies sector;
2. to summarize the existing special provisions in curriculum, delivery, counselling and support;
3. to discover the reasons 16-19 year olds give for choosing to study externally or in mixed mode;
4. to determine the nature and extent of required external studies provisions;
5. to determine the special needs required by this age group in terms of curriculum, delivery methods, counselling and support;
6. to make specific future policy recommendations.

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TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD.
296 Payneham Road, Payneham, South Australia 5070, Australia.
Telephone (08) 42 7905
(Incorporated in South Australia)

As you will notice, from the methodology in the attached project brief, this involves seeking information from Heads of External Studies Departments in all tertiary institutions providing external studies. As well, it seeks information from student counsellors or course advisors, that is, the person/s to whom potential off-campus students would go in order to obtain information about off-campus studies. In conjunction with the Project Advisory Committee, a number of questions have been formulated in order that the objectives of the project can be achieved. These are enclosed as Attachment D.

I am writing to seek your support for this project. You can do this by answering the attached questions about the 16-19 year olds who may be enrolled at your institution in the off-campus or mixed mode of study. It would also be helpful, if you could ask a student counsellor/course advisor to answer the questions in Attachment E. There is an additional copy of the questions included for this purpose. This information will provide a useful data base and thus help to achieve the objectives of this project. I do hope you will kindly agree to this. A reply paid envelope is provided for your convenience. If the space provided in insufficient for your answers please feel free to complete your answers on the extra sheets provided.

If you should require any further information or wish to discuss the project with me, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Centre.

Yours sincerely,

Zofia Krzemionka
Research and Development Officer

encs.

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Mr R Cruise
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HOBART TAS 7000

Mr Roy Farren
Principal
Technical Extension Service
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PERTH WA 6000

APPENDIX 7

TAFE

TAFE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LTD.
296 Payneham Road, Payneham, South Australia 5070, Australia. Phone (08) 42 7905
(Incorporated in South Australia)

OP24/ZK/lp:14-lett

24th April, 1987

Dear

Distance Education for 16-19 year olds

I write with reference to the above research project and the support requested of your institution in the letter dated 8th April (copy attached). Currently we are preparing a final report which is due to be completed at the end of May and would like to include information about the participation of 16-19 year olds enrolled externally at your institution. If you are able to provide this information we would appreciate your written response as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have not received the initial letter and attachments, as I will be able to send you the infomation required. If you wish to discuss the project further I can be contacted at the TAFE National Centre on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Zofia Krzemionka
Research and Development Officer

enc.

DRAFT STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. All students to be interviewed will have filled out a questionnaire prior to attending the interview.

2. Students will be interviewed for 2-3 hours in small groups of 3-4.

3. These groups will be selected from the institutions participating in the questionnaire.

4. A mix of students from rural and isolated areas will be included. A small sample of this group may have to be interviewed individually or in a small group by telephone.

5. The questionnaire will form the basis of the interview, with questions and discussion focusing on developing further details of how the off-campus study mode was chosen and how it fits into the student's commitments and career/work plans.

A. Course information

(1) Mode of Enrolment (Ref. Q.7.)

1.1 Why did they choose the study in this way?

1.2 Preferred/Actual enrolment: if not the same: why is it not the case?

(2) Advice in choosing mode of study (Ref. Q.8.)

2.1 If you were advised/influenced by someone, why was this (these) significant?

2.2 Why were the other types of people not consulted?

(3) Forms of instruction (Ref. Q.9.)

3.1 Which forms of instruction are most effective?

3.2 Which other forms of instruction would you like to see introduced and why?

3.3 Do you believe there are any forms of instruction that are generally more suitable for your age group (16-19 years)

(4) **Contact** (Ref. Q.10.)

4.1 Who do you contact most frequently and why?

4.2 Who do you contact less frequently and why?

(5) **Options for further study** (Ref. Q.11.)

Enlarge/clarify student's reasons for preferred mode of further study.

(6) **Choice of course/institution**

6.1 How did you find out about the availability of the course?

6.2 How did you choose the institution?

B. Reasons for choosing to study off-campus

(1) Amplify significantly important reasons.

C. Personal Details

1.1 Which, if any, personal factors have affected your reasons for choosing to study off-campus?
e.g. Secondary education (Ref. Q. 25, 26, 27);
your current work/career prospects; the work/study relationship.

1.2 How have you organised your lifestyle to incorporate this off-campus study?

1.3 Further discussion of the open ended section (Ref. Q. 28) regarding:

positive features

difficulties

needs not met by the institution.

D. Services provided for students of off-campus studies

What do you know about the following services at your institution?

Curriculum materials

What is useful from the range of materials available to you

What additional materials would you *like* to have made available to you?

Delivery methods

Which delivery methods do you find most beneficial.

What other delivery methods you like to see introduced and why?

Counselling: personal support

Who is available to you for personal support?

Your tutor?
Your course adviser?
Your student counsellor?
Other students?
Friends/relatives?

Is it adequate for your needs?

How would you prefer to have personal support made available?

Support: academic

Who is available to your for academic support?

Your tutor?
Your course adviser?

How is this support made available to you?

Is the support available meeting your needs?

How would you prefer to have academic support available?